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BALLADE: AMERICA TO OXFORD

And that sweet city with her dreaming spires.—M. ARNOLD.

Enwapt in meditation deep,
Silent to all our questioning,
As if inviolate to keep
Those wistful memories that cling,
Like ivy sprays encompassing
Your silver walls; those earlier fires
That flamed so bright, now smouldering,
Sweet city of the dreaming spires.

We come to you by pathways steep,
On barren seas adventuring;
And your serene and tranquil sleep,
Wiser than our awakening,
Heals all the petty wounds that sting,
Stilling our fever of desires,
Rebukes our aimless wandering—
Sweet city of the dreaming spires.

On us the young, whose pulses leap—
Whose thoughts are ever on the wing,
From those autumnal fields you reap—
Your mellow golden mantle fling.
For we are sated with the spring,
Its aching sweetness irks and tires,
We seek a riper harvesting,
Sweet city of the dreaming spires.

Our weary hearts to you we bring,
Whose wisdom brooded on our sires,
With beauty all-transfiguring,
Sweet city of the dreaming spires.

CHARLOTTE F. BABCOCK.

Boston, Massachusetts.

DR. WILLIAM KING, HUMORIST

As much lightness and sparkle, color and action, heartiness and bigness as humor adds to the section of the universe which we see through our peephole of existence, still it is one of the most transitory, most limited, most non-universal products of the human heart. Indeed, it is so undeniably local and hopelessly temporal that we ought reverently to cherish, as we cherish crumbling old first editions, the names and the histories of those men of the past who martyred their fame with posterity in order to make their immediate contemporaries laugh; we ought to have somewhere an honor roll of those geniuses whose works are dead, dry, dull and forgotten, but whose lives served for a little while to brighten the mouldy corners of human existences or to play along its poorer arches, or to gild its more glorious friezes. And on such an honor roll, one of the highest placed names would be that of Dr. William King (1663-1712), of whom, I dare say, not half a dozen people who read this article have ever before heard.

Dr. King (and how inadequate and incongruous that title sounds!) was as true a humorist as ever lived—a humorist in prose, a humorist in verse, a humorist in his daily life, a humorist in his profession, a humorist in his career, and (oh, wonder of wonders!) a humorist in his attitude toward himself.

In the midst of an Augustan world where system, order, correctness, cold judiciousness, infinite revision and polish, and purest classicism were the fetishes of every scribbler, King could write with all sincerity the following verses, which are the antithesis of all that his age exalted; they were found in his pocket at his death, "being just fresh written with a lead pencil":

'Tis by no scheme or method that I go,
But paint in verse my notions as they flow;
With heat the wanton images pursue,
Fond of the old, yet still creating new;
Fancy myself in some secure retreat,
Resolve to be content, and so be great.

That last line of his explains nearly all of his career. Living in an age of cheap squabbling, petty ambitions, violent jeal-

ousies, and intricate politics, an age in which almost every poet lived a life an account of which reads like the biography of a professional intriguer, an age in which Dryden was just finishing his game of political and religious see-sawing, in which Sackville was struggling upward at the court, in which Addison was toiling through various diplomatic offices to be Under-secretary of State, in which Prior was shining as an ambassador now at The Hague, now at Paris, in which Gay was feverishly seeking the patronage of various duchesses, in which Pope was eternally bickering with his contemporaries for his place in the sun, in which even the amiable Arbuthnot prescribed his way to royal favor, in which Defoe vacillated from party to party with almost every change of weather, and in which Swift strutted before Tories and Whigs as the mysterious power behind the throne—living in such an age, King tossed riches aside with contempt, cast away half a dozen political appointments through utter boredom, and steadfastly refused to take his life seriously.

He obtained a Doctor's degree in Civil Law at Oxford when he was twenty-nine years old, and afterwards made a great reputation in London as an astute and learned lawyer. But, to quote the rather strong language of that good old curmudgeon, Dr. Johnson, "He did not love his profession, nor indeed any kind of business which interrupted his voluptuary dreams or forced him to rouse from that indulgence in which only he could find delight." By 1700 "the expense of his pleasures and neglect of business had lessened his revenues," Johnson goes on to say, "without stimulating his industry." Yet, "notwithstanding his habitual indolence," he still maintained his reputation as a civilian because of "the discernment and ability he discovered in the courts of delegates."

This reputation procured him the patronage of the Lord High Admiral of England, through whose influence King was made Judge of the Admiralty in Ireland; later on he was made Vicar-general of Armagh; still later sole Commissioner of the Prizes; and still later Keeper of the Records of Birmingham Tower. He now had the means of accumulating wealth beyond the fondest hopes of the most ambitious poet in Grub Street. "But," as

Dr. Johnson regretfully and perhaps enviously remarked, "it is vain to put wealth within the reach of him who will not stretch out his hand to take it." King was fortunate enough to discover that thousandth man, of whom Solomon so fervently wrote, in the person of a Judge Upton, a *rara avis* of the same amiable, witty, and good-humored temperament as himself (Dr. Johnson put it, "as idle and thoughtless"), and at Judge Upton's pleasant country house, called Mountown, near Dublin, the two cronies spent most of their time "in convivial indulgence and poetical amusement."

That there were at Mountown other enticements than wine and poetry for such an epicure as King, the following invocation by its jovial visitor is sufficient evidence:

Mountown! thou sweet retreat from Dublin cares,
Be famous for thy apples and thy pears;
For turnips, carrots, beans, and pease;
For Peggy's butter, and for Peggy's cheese.
May clouds of pigeons round about thee fly!
But condescend sometimes to make a pie.
May fat geese gaggle with melodious voice,
And ne'er want gooseberries or apple-sauce!
Ducks in thy ponds, and chicken in thy pens,
And be thy turkeys numerous as thy hens!
May thy black pigs lie warm in little sty,
And have no thought to grieve them till they die!
Mountown! the Muses' most delicious theme;
Oh! may thy codlins ever swim in cream!
Thy rasp- and straw-berries in Bordeaux drown,
To add a redder tincture to their own!
Thy white-wine, sugar, milk, together club,
To make that gentle viand syllabub.
Thy tarts to tarts, cheese-cakes to cheese-cakes join,
To spoil the relish of the flowing wine.
But to the fading palate bring relief,
By thy Westphalian ham or Belgic beef;
And, to complete thy blessings, in a word,
May still thy soil be generous as its lord!

One likes to linger over the thought of these two congenial spirits gleefully neglecting their solemn judicial cares, and hieing them away in a greatcoach driven by some sharp-tongued Irishman whom they tease with pert comments, and with whom they jest and exchange hilarious buffets of wit; and one likes to

think of them before the fire in the old house of a winter night, reading poetry to each other, and writing delightfully smart verses on their contemporaries, and discussing Horace and Boileau, and telling many a merry tale, and passing many a droll witticism until far in the early hours of the morning, when they drink a last glass of wine and help each other off to bed. One likes to think of them trying to approximate once more the life lived of old time in Merry England, a life which in one of his genial prefaces, our Dr. King describes in a manner impossible of duplication by any other Englishman of his time:

The author does not value himself upon the whole; but if he shows his esteem for Horace, . . . and declares his love to the old British hospitality, charity, and valour, when the arms of his family, the old pikes, muskets, and halberts, hung up in the hall over the long table, and the marrow-bones lay on the floor, and Chevy Chace and The Old Courtier of the Queen's were placed over the carved mantle-piece, and the beef and brown bread were carried every day to the poor; he desires little further.

But after all, we must rouse ourselves from these "voluptuary dreams," and face the stern old Dr. Johnson's comment to the effect that King too frequently visited Mountown, there "delighting to neglect his interest, forget his cares, and desert his duty." The result was that, one by one, King abandoned or lost his many offices and his many opportunities of obtaining easy wealth. In 1708 he returned to London "with his poetry, his idleness, and his wit," as Dr. Johnson said, although a more charitable biographer adds that King's pockets contained, on his return, a "few merry poems and humorous essays."

He had no sure means of support besides a meager fellowship from Christ Church, Oxford; but he was not the one to worry about fortunes so long as he could have the unlaborious tranquillity the fellowship secured him. For two or three years he lived perfectly contented until once again an opportunity to acquire a plentiful income was forced by political friends (Swift, Prior, Friend and other Tories) into his reluctant hands: he was

presented with the keys to the Gazetteers' Office and to the Paper Office, and, without having troubled himself to attend in the anterooms of the great, and without having mortified his pride by humble and flattering entreaties to politicians, he was made Gazetteer. Circumstances were such that he could not refuse the office; but by the middle of the next year, he had become bored and disgusted with his duties and impatiently resigned his position.

He retired to a country house on the pleasant Surrey side of the Thames, where he had passed a summer or two before. From here he made cheerful visits to his cousin, Lord Clarendon, at Somerset House just across the river; and when he was not visiting in this last summer of his life, he steeped himself in his loved tranquillity "with a friend, a bottle, and his books." One of his ways of finding amusement that summer forms one of the best stories in English literary history. Archbishop Tenison, of Lambeth, where King lived, was not of a nature which King could find agreeable, for the archbishop was, among other things, somewhat of a political bigot. Consequently, he became sullen and morose on the surrender of Dunkirk to Hill in 1712. King at once resolved to remedy the situation, and to insure the celebration of the event by the populace of the country round. So forthwith he purchased a few barrels of ale, and caused them to be distributed to the neighborhood, which he thus filled with honest merriment, to the complete disgust of the sour-tempered archbishop.

This innocent little jest must have given King an immense amount of delight; for it is said that his most genuine pleasure always consisted in trifles. And, indeed, was it not a much greater humorist and a much wiser man than King who took for the motto of his later years, "*Vive la bagatelle*"? In truth, that whole last summer of King's was such as he must have longed for all his life; for though he loved the company of those whose humor tallied with his, yet he was never happier than when he thought he was hidden away from the world. And in his retirement at Lambeth, he was surrounded by all in which his tender, whimsical, and half melancholy nature delighted—quietness, books, a few chosen friends, a few loving

relatives. He died on Christmas Day, 1712, at the somewhat early age of forty-nine. But if it is true that "one crowded hour of glorious life is worth an age without a name," then that last bright summer of King's was worth far, far more to him than the great names and sounding titles he had given up so often, and the fame he has never yet acquired.

Such was the life of a man whose entire career was singularly, almost pathetically, ironic—a man who, being a humorist, found that his richest joke was having lived; a man who, in the midst of an ambitious and struggling world, loved only dreams, poetry, laughter, friends, and good scholarship; a man who devoutly hated his profession, and yet who made a tremendous success in it; a man who cared nothing for riches and offices, but who had both almost literally thrust into his hands; a man who loved quietness and comparative solitude, and yet who was, during almost his entire life, constantly in the public eye; and finally, a man who had for his chief interest in life the writing of poetry, and yet who has left nothing at all which the world remembers.

II

Though King's principal delight lay in writing poetry, he published many prose works, some of them political, some scholarly, some humorous, some translated from other languages. Because he disliked Bentley personally, he took part in the famous Boyle and Bentley squabble over a few forgotten Greek Epistles; in 1700 he parodied the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society in his *Useful Transactions in Philosophy*, which were designed especially to ridicule the writings of Sir Hans Sloane, Secretary of the Society. Just what the poetic and imaginative Dr. King would have thought of some of our twentieth-century scientists may be guessed from the ironic tone of the following comments on a certain eighteenth-century scientist's book:

There is a copious index; and at the end a catalogue of all the doctor's works, concerning cockles, English beetles, snails, spiders that get up into the air and throw us down cobwebs, a monster vomited up by a baker, and such like; which, if carefully perused, would wonderfully improve us.

He says some of the chiefest rarities are the pizzle and spermatic vessels of a snail, delineated by a microscope, the omentum or caul of its throat, its Fallopian tube, and its subcrocean testicle; which are things Hippocrates, Galen, Celsus, Fornelius, and Harvey, were never masters of.

The previous year he had published another amusing prose work entitled *A Journey to London in the Year 1698*, which was written to ridicule the infinite scientific details and trivialities of Dr. Martin Lister's *A Journey to Paris*, and which, according to King, was designed as a vindication of England "in the view of shewing Britain as much preferable to France as wealth, plenty, and liberty, are beyond tortises' hearts, champignons, and moroglios."

This same unlucky Dr. Lister was the occasion of King's writing what is certainly his best and wittiest work—*The Art of Cookery* (1708), a versified imitation of Horace's *Ars Poetica*, but having for its theme, instead of the pleasurable poetic art, the both pleasurable and necessary culinary art. Lister had published the works of Apacius Coelius *Concerning the Soups and Sauces of the Ancients*, a minutely pedantic book which fell into King's hands, and which educed from the humorist a series of equally pedantic and delightfully serio-comic letters, to Dr. Lister and to others, concerning Lister's book. These letters serve as introduction and appendix to *The Art of Cookery*, and, together with the poem, establish the certainty of King's scholarship and wit.

These letters, like some others the century produced, are an oasis to anyone who has crept through the illimitable and dusty desert of the general run of eighteenth-century prose—through the essays, the criticisms, the philosophies, the sermons, all with their labored and intricate conceits and personifications, their ponderous seriousness, their spiteful jibes, pointless classical references given only to show the erudition of their author, their vast generalizations, their sophisticated egotism. Amidst all this, King's *Letters to Dr. Lister and Others*, with their outrageous pedantry, their gleeful mockery, and their sparkling familiarity, give some of us more pleasing relief than do even the more noted effusions of Addison and Steele.

In the first letter, King writes to a friend:

You tantalize me only when you tell me of the edition of a book by the ingenious Dr. Lister, which you say is a treatise *De Condimentis & Opsoniis Veterum*, Of the Sauces and Soups of the Ancients, as I take it. . . . You have made my mouth water but have not given me wherewithal to satisfy my appetite.

I have raised a thousand notions to myself, only from the title. Where could such a treatise lay hid? What manuscripts have been collated? Under what emperor was it written? Might it not have been in the reign of Helio-gabalus, who, though vicious and in some things fantastical, yet was not incurious in the grand affair of *eating*?

Consider, dear sir, in what uncertainties we must remain at present. You know my neighbor Mr. Greatrix is a learned antiquary. I showed him your letter; which threw him into such a dubiousness, and indeed perplexity of mind, that the next day he durst not put any *catchup* in his *fish-sauce*, nor have his beloved *pepper*, *oil*, and *lemon*, with his *partridges*, lest, before he had seen Dr. Lister's book, he might transgress in using something not common to the ancients. . . .

Pardon me, sir, if I break-off abruptly; for I am going to monsieur D'Avaux, a person famous for easing the tooth-ach by *avulsion*. He has promised to show me how to strike a lancelet through the jugular of a *carp*, so as the blood may issue thence with the greatest effusion, and then will instantly perform the operation of stewing it in its own blood, in the presence of myself and several more virtuosi.

To Dr. Lister he writes with mock gravity:

Sir, I am a plain man, and therefore never use compliments; but I must tell you that I have a great ambition to hold correspondence with you, especially that I may beg you to communicate your remarks from the ancients concerning *dentiscalps*, vulgarly called *tooth-picks*.

He then proceeds to trace the history of the little instruments from their origin among the Egyptians, on down through the Homeric age, and to their present status among beef-eating jurymen.

In another letter,

I hope to live to see the day when every mistress of a family, and every steward, shall call up their children and servants with, "Come, miss Betty, how much have you got of your *Art of Cookery*?" "Where did you leave off, miss Isabel?"—"Miss Kitty, are you no further than *King Henry and the Miller*?"—"Yes, madam, I am come to—

. . . . His name shall be enroll'd
In Estcourt's book, whose gridiron's framed with gold.

"Pray, mother, is that our master Estcourt?"—"Well, child, if you mind this, you shall not be put to your *Assembly Catechism* next Saturday." What a glorious sight it will be, and how becoming to a great family, to see the butler out-learning the steward, and the painful scullery-maid exerting her memory far beyond the mumping housekeeper.

But if all these quotations have taken up too much of our time, "I hope I may be excused," to quote our author, "after so great an example; for I declare that I have no design but to encourage learning, and am very far from any designs against it"!

The poem to which these letters are an introduction is remarkable chiefly for the fact that it is written on such a subject as cookery. But that, in addition, it draws a pretty close parallel between poetry and cooking, indiscriminately employing the language of one to give advice about the other, and that it parodies Horace's *Ars Poetica*, these are facts that are little less remarkable than the first.

When Art and Nature join, th' effect will be
Some nice *ragout*, or charming *fricasse*.
The critic strikes out all that is not just,
And 'tis even so the butler chips his crust.

'Tis a sage question if the art of cooks
Is lodg'd by Nature, or attain'd by books.

These sound like an epicurean nightmare of the *Essay on Criticism*. Had Jaques been a cook, he might have enlarged on the Ages of Man somewhat after the fashion of King in this singular poem; our Doctor begins with the child, who

Is very humoursome, and makes great clutter,
Till he has windows on his bread and butter.

We then pass to the "smooth-fac'd youth" whose "eating must be little, costly, nice"; thence to maturer age, which seeks only frugality and health; and finally, we come to old-age, which

By still intruding years,
Torments the feeble heart with anxious fears:
Morose, perverse in humour, diffident,
The more he still abounds, the less content.

Our high-feeding poet even launches into one of the "progress" themes which were so common in the eighteenth century, and which are permanently exemplified in *The Progress of Poesy*. King traces the Progress of Cooking from the time when

Our Cambrian fathers, sparing in their food,
First broil'd their goats on bars of wood,

on down from ruler to ruler and civilization to civilization even to the eighteenth century, when

He that of honour, wit, and mirth, partakes,
May be a fit companion o'er beef-steaks.

Just as *The Art of Cookery* imitates Horace, so does King's longest poem, *The Art of Love*, imitate Ovid. The title is promising enough; but it must be admitted that the poem itself does not gratify our expectations of what it ought to be. Perhaps its failure with us lies not in the poem, but in ourselves: for the eighteenth-century critics praised it highly for its "purity of sentiment," which is "all prudent, honourable, and virtuous." But the fact remains that, on the whole, we find the poem rather tedious. It is true that nearly all the fourteen Parts of the poem conclude with a spicy little story told briskly in tetrameter verse with a great deal of smartness—pert tales which relate with saucy familiarity how Romulus contrived the Rape of the Sabines, how Pasiphæ loved the bull, how Achilles dressed in women's clothes, how Vulcan trapped his wife and Mars, and so on. These gaily impudent stories do much to compensate for that tiresome "purity of sentiment" in the rest of the poem; but even their jauntiness does not compare with that in another poem about the melancholy Orpheus and his unfortunate Eurydice.

This Orpheus was a jolly boy,
Born long before the siege of Troy.

The cunning varlet could devise,
For country-folk ten thousand lies ;

Could make a tiger in a trice
Tame as a cat and catch your mice ;

And by the help of pleasing ditties,
Make mill-stones run, and build up cities.

After he had had married Eurydice and taught her the "ballad-singing trade",

Each had the use of fluent tongue,
If Dicé scolded, Orpheus sung.
And so, by discord without strife,
Compos'd one harmony of life.

But as these two went strolling on,
Poor Dicé's scene of life was done.

Orpheus went to Linus to ask for advice as to how Eurydice might be recovered. But Linus tells him,

'Tis many an honest man's petition,
That he may be in your condition,
If such a blessing might be had
To change a living wife for dead.

Consider first, you save her diet ;
Consider next, you keep her quiet :
For, pray, what was she all along,
Except the burthen of your song?

In anger, Orpheus rushes off to seek counsel of Urganda concerning the whereabouts of Eurydice:

She smilingly replied, "I'll tell
This easily without a spell :
The wife you look for's gone to Hell."

King explains that

Nothing pleas'd Orpheus half so well
As the news that he must go to Hell.

And so off he starts to the nether regions, but meeting the fairies and elves of Mab and Oberon, he is forced to sing them songs, and afterwards to dine with their queen. She offers the minstrel viands worthy of the imagination of the poet of the

Midsummer Night's Dream, and far above that of the poet of *The Rape of the Lock*. She offers him

A roasted ant, that's nicely done,
By one small atom of the sun.
These are flies' eggs, in moon-shine poach'd ;
This a flea's thigh in collops scotch'd,
'Twas hunted yesterday i' th' Park,
And like t' have 'scaped us in the dark.
This is a dish entirely new ;
Butterflies' brains dissolved in dew ;
These lovers' vows, these courtiers' hopes,
Things to be eat by microscopes ;
These sucking mites, a glow-worm's heart,
This a delicious rainbow-tart.

A drop of water newly torn
Fresh from the rosy-fingered Morn ;
A pearl of milk that's gently prest
From blooming Hebe's early breast ;
With half a one of Cupid's tears,
When he in embryo first appears ;
And honey from an infant bee :
Makes liquor for the gods and me!

After such a display of genuine fancy, it would be cruel to King's memory to quote at length from the rest of the poem, for much of the remainder is invective against the Roman Catholic Church—witty invective, certainly, but too much like the general stock of biting eighteenth-century satire to be attractive. He wrote many other poems—half a dozen of them artificial love lyrics, two or three of them dry political satires, and the rest jolly, realistic tales and epigrams, occasionally a bit unrefined, but always original, and always smartly sophisticated. None of these are really great poems; but, if we except *The Rape of the Lock*, was there, pray, any great poem written in England between the years 1700 and 1715?

In an age of mediocrity and artificiality, King was above the mediocre and beyond the artificial; in an age of self-conscious affectation of art and the classics, King was brisk, spirited, and natural; in an age of depressing didacticism, King was bright, carefree, and jovial; in an age of set forms and fashions, and of assiduous imitations and painstaking following of rules, King was singularly free and original; and in an age of much

heavy prose and unspeakably deadening verse, King was the author of prose and verse which, after more than two hundred years, is still readable and still enjoyable. He deserves to be better known. -

GEORGE G. WILLIAMS.

Rice Institute. -

TO ANY ARTIST

(in time of infertility)

Lie still, little sorrowing heart,
Nor nurse thy woe;
All things that endure cry out
Go slow, very slow.

Were the glorying lyrical lark
Too swiftly to rise,
No music should sprinkle the earth
Spilt from the skies.

A while must the harper's hands
Sleep on his lap,
Till he hear the ensummoning sound
Of the baton's tap-tap.

Should the strengthening embryo rise
Impatient and vexed
Unfold in a moment of time,
It were ruins the next.

So thou, little sorrowing heart,
Smile in thy wombing;
Long, long shall thy budding be,
And long thy blooming.

A. E. JOHNSON.

Syracuse University.

MODERN SCEPTICAL CRITICISM OF SHAKESPEARE: ELMER EDGAR STOLL

Modern sceptical criticism of Shakespeare, deplored too often by sceptics fearful for the poet's glory, has been defended by Professor Karl Young, in the *North American Review*, March, 1921. As to the general tenets and leaders of this particular type of criticism may I refer, without further comment, to Mr. Young's defence, and also to the same writer's review, in the *Iowa Philological Quarterly* (No. 3, July, 1922), of Professor Schücking's *Die Charakter-probleme bei Shakespeare* (1919). It is sufficient to say that the field is not wholly new. Had Rümelin's *Shakespeare-Studien* of 1866 immediately followed Samuel Johnson's *Preface* and notes to his 1765 edition of Shakespeare, no particular astonishment would have been attached to all this modern questioning of Shakespeare. But between Johnson and Rümelin appeared the German and English romantic idolaters of Shakespeare: Schlegel, Coleridge, Lamb, Hazlitt, Ulrici, and Gervinus. And after Rümelin came Dowden, with his scathing denunciation of the German,¹ and Professor Bradley's brilliant æsthetic criticism. Hence the insinuations of modern sceptical Shakespearean critics have appeared magnified and almost vituperative by contrast.

At present, Germany, England, and America present each one prominent representative of this *νοῦβυστικὸν* type of Shakespearean criticism. Professor L. L. Schücking of the University of Leipzig, in the work just cited in connection with Mr. Young, has ventured, by historical investigations of Shakespeare's dramatic art, to undermine the psychological consistency of, among others, Cleopatra, Cordelia, Brutus, Julius Cæsar, and Oliver (*As You Like It*). The Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson, pursuing first another historical tack, has pointed out the inconsistency of Hamlet, then, depending partly upon his own æsthetic sense, redistributed parts of *Julius Cæsar* to Marlowe and others, and

¹ Edward Dowden, *Shakespeare, His Mind and Art* (1874), p. 189 n. (Reprinted in Harper, 1918 edition, p. 189 n.)

convinced himself that *Henry V* and *Richard III* are Shakespeare apocrypha. Even more recently he has published two further volumes on the Shakespearean canon, "*Hamlet Once More*" (a vigorous reply to the late A. Clutton-Brock), an article in *The New Criterion* (III, 172) on "The Naturalistic Theory of *Hamlet*." Finally, Professor Elmer Edgar Stoll, of the University of Minnesota, in seven consistent monographs,³ reveals the psychological inconsistencies of several of Shakespeare's most prominent characters—notably Falstaff, Shylock, Iago, Macbeth, Othello, and Hamlet—and, like Mr. Schücking, falls back historically upon the simplicity of Elizabethan dramatic art, to explain them. It is significant, then, that all three, though with somewhat varying emphasis, rely on the historical background of the Elizabethan drama to account for these inconsistencies. My first task now is to point out the general κίνδυνοι νοῦ, "dangers of the mind", involved in this sceptical-historical criticism.

³ "The Ghosts in Shakespeare."—*Mod. Lang. Pub.*, 1907, vol. 22.

"Shylock."—*Journal of English and German Philology*, 1911, vol. 10.

"Anachronism in Shakespeare Criticism."—*Mod. Phil.*, 1910, vol. 7.

"Criminals in Shakespeare and Science."—*Mod. Phil.*, 1912, vol. 10.

"Falstaff."—*Mod. Phil.*, 1914, vol. 12.

"Othello."—*Univ. of Minn. Studies*, 1915, No. 2.

"Hamlet."—*Univ. of Minn. Studies*, 1919, No. 7.

I venture to neglect Mr. Stoll's "Shakespeare, Marston, and the Malcontent Type" (*Mod. Phil.*, III, 1906, p. 281); because this early study is not of the argumentative, sceptical texture of the rest of the monographs and because it is superseded largely by the more recent work, "*Hamlet*", noted above. It does, however, exhibit the critic's subsequent emphasis on Elizabethan Dramatic Convention, in this case a conventional character.

Mr. Stoll has further a recent article in the *Contemporary Review*, March, 1924, in reply to Mr. A. Clutton-Brock's *Shakespeare's Hamlet*.

Even more recently Macmillan has published a collection of Mr. Stoll's articles under the title, *Studies in Shakespeare*. This book, however, presents only two new studies, "Characterization" and "Method in Comedy", and essentially reproduces four of the above—the most important of all, "*Hamlet*" and "*Othello*", not being represented at all!

In *Wisconsin Studies*, No. 18 (1923) appears a certainly non-definitive survey of Mr. Stoll's critical codex.

For all three men in general see C. H. Herford's *Sketch of Recent Shakespeare Investigation*, 1893-1923 (London: Blackie and Son, 1923).

When Mr. Robertson denoted *Henry V* and *Richard III* as Shakespeare apocrypha, the late Mr. William Archer, for one, readily consented. But when Mr. Robertson proceeded to redistribute parts of *Julius Cæsar* to Marlowe and others, Mr. Archer himself was provoked to astonished and vigorous disagreement: "He [Mr. Robertson] has here fallen a victim to the fascination of his own critical system. They have swept him off his feet." And Mr. J. M. Murry also remarked, "... he [Mr. Robertson] undermines so diligently that he is in danger of being hoist with his own petard." This, therefore, is the first danger of sceptical criticism—"Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself and falls on the other side."

The second negative aspect of such intellectual criticism might well be termed an æsthetic "blind spot." Mr. Robertson in his adequate discussion of the weaknesses inherent in Signor Croce's recent remarks on Shakespeare readily noted, among others, an ironical lack of feeling for Shakespeare's individual *poetry* (Signor Croce accepted and extolled the rhetorical *Titus Andronicus* as "splendid" and "Shakespearean"). But in his own criticism of *Hamlet* Mr. Robertson neglects this æsthetic side of the question, preferring to explain Hamlet's delay wholly on the historical basis: that Shakespeare "retained all the archaic machinery" of an old *Hamlet* (ascribed to Kyd), and "that Shakespeare could not make a consistent play out of a plot which retained a strictly barbaric action while the hero was transformed into a supersubtle Elizabethan." To which Mr. A. Clutton-Brock replies: "Though Hamlet's behavior may seem to us unintelligible, we are, æsthetically, convinced by it. As he acts, we feel, so he would act; and that is all we have a right to demand of the dramatist." And adds Mr. H. J. M. somewhat brutally in the *Nation and Athenæum* (May 27, 1922): "Mr. Robertson . . . is an extremely acute, fair, and honest advocate, but he does happen to lack a quality which you really cannot leave out in appreciating Shakespeare—the faculty of experiencing a work of art." Hence the possession of an æsthetic "blind spot" is the second great sin that "thunders in the index" of the sceptical critic of Shakespeare.

It should not now be surprising to see those same two unfortunate aberrations appear in other such sceptically inclined Shakespearean critics. I venture to suggest, without further study, that both deplored shortcomings of Mr. Robertson will appear in Professor Schücking. My interest now, however, is in the American, Professor Stoll, who seems to show, even better, apparently, than Mr. Robertson, the sceptical critic's two typical, dangerous *confusiones*. But it is not my purpose to emphasize solely these negative aspects of Mr. Stoll's criticism. I prefer to point out, further, the great importance attached to Mr. Stoll's individual discoveries in the field of historical Elizabethan dramatic convention and to conclude, positively, that the critic's application of these dramatic conventions to explain the inconsistencies of Shakespeare's characters is an unfortunate misdirection of energy—that these same dramatic conventions, if intrinsically interpreted (or even possibly applied to other aspects of Shakespeare), represent invaluable historical investigations simply in and by themselves.

Before proceeding to this interpretation of Mr. Stoll it would be well, however, to outline deliberately the critic's method in approaching and explaining the inconsistencies of Shakespeare's characters. Mr. Young in his article in the *North American Review* has briefly suggested Mr. Stoll's destructive attitude toward Othello. The same is substantially true of the critic's distrust of Hamlet, Macbeth, Iago, and the others noted above. To exemplify this distrust, and, further, Mr. Stoll's solution of his doubt, I shall now give more completely the substance of his creed and of his discussion of two characters, Shylock and Othello.

II.

"Genius is nothing mystical", writes Mr. Stoll, "and is not uplifted beyond reach of reason and common sense. It is no oracle, but the true and troubled voice of the age. To hear the critics you would think that on the 23rd of April, 1616, the earth yawned and the light of the sun and moon darkened. Shakespeare is nature, cry the critics still." Yes, like Michelangelo, "who paints man standing where by the laws of nature

he should fall. Neither genius is nature's self; either is the soul of an age teeming with audacious shapes and attitudes which nature never knew; and in the case of the playwright it is as true as in the case of the painter that some of these attitudes are impossible."

Shylock is the first object of Mr. Stoll's attack. Shylock loses his daughter, his ducats, and the decree of the court, and is called an object of pity and a martyr to his race. Yet Bassanio likes "not fair terms and a villain's mind", Shylock "will execute the villainy you teach me", and the audience roared at his "I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys." Is Shylock (asks Mr. Stoll) a pathetic martyr or a comic villain? Othello, the critic continues, "of a free and open nature", "made of no such baseness as jealous creatures are", "one not easily jealous", commands in a crisis, "Keep up your bright swords for the dew will rust them", and apostrophizes Desdemona, "Oh, my soul's joy". Yet within one scene, in three hundred lines, he drops from "Perdition catch my soul, but I do love thee", to "I'll tear her all to pieces", "Oh that the slave had forty thousand lives", "Oh, blood, blood, blood". Would a man of Othello's character as exhibited at the beginning of the play (comments the critic) so suddenly credit the insinuating evidence of a dream and a lost handkerchief from the lips of the man who had supplanted in office the supposed seducer of a much-loved wife?

In both cases (Mr. Stoll would sum up) Shakespeare has *not* consistently drawn the main characters of his play. The same might incidentally be said of some of the minor characters—Emilia, for example. How now shall we account for this deflection, this discrepancy of genius?

"The function of criticism," argues Mr. Stoll, "is to make the reader for the time being a contemporary of the poet", for "there can be no artistic effect apart from the intention of the author or spirit of his age." "Critics," he continues, "did not conceive of genius as utterly dependent, potent only as it absorbed all the living thoughts *of the period*, and was initiated into the newest mysteries of the craft." "My purpose is to discover something of the dramatist's intention," not "overlay his text with notions of *our* philosophy and science." Hence for

Shakespeare's shortcomings he offers two historical explanations: (1) comparative study of Elizabethan dramatic conventions and (2) chronological study of Elizabethan life, of Shakespeare's sources, and of the early criticism. Logic and study of the text he utilizes subordinately to refute the prevailing orthodox explanations. I shall now review the two positive lines of historical argument briefly before showing his application of them to the two inconsistencies noted above.

Mr. Stoll has used twenty Elizabethan dramatic conventions seventy times in his seven monographs to explain the inconsistencies of Shakespeare's characters or to refute orthodox opinions thereon. The following, for example, are his five most popular conventions. "Elizabethan types" (the first) include the clown, the villain, the cowardly soldier, the wit, the fop, and others. One stage character might even represent two types. Closely resembling these stereotyped characters are the well-known "Elizabethan humours"—jealousy, melancholy, choler, and so forth. "Soliloquies", the second convention, were meant on the Elizabethan stage to be taken at their face value. Elizabethan ghosts (third) might be the dead person himself or a devil taking the form of that person to shake the dispositions of men. Revenge, an eye for an eye, "measure for measure," is a typical Elizabethan convention on the stage, though not in Elizabethan life. Connected with it somewhat is the convention of the calumniator credited, by which, contrary to all psychology, if a villain calumniates a hero's wife, that hero must immediately believe it, for the audience expects it. And finally, conventionally, the comments of prominent characters on other characters in an Elizabethan play must be taken at their face value, like the soliloquies. At the end of a play, particularly, when Fortinbras calls Hamlet a "soldier," Shakespeare meant that Hamlet deserved consideration as a "soldier"—and very strong consideration. Such are five leading Elizabethan conventions, by far the most important explanation Mr. Stoll uses, in excusing Shakespeare's shortcomings.

Historically again—to take up the second or chronological line of argument—Mr. Stoll emphasizes the necessary relationship of Shakespeare's character portrayal to Elizabethan life

and beliefs—such as, for example, the exclusion of the Jew from England, and Ghosts again. Then he notes, emphatically, Elizabethan ignorance of psychology. He will say, with reference to psychology, that “Shakespeare is presenting not so much—in all its consistence—a character, as a highly emotional situation”, that “these great emotional situations may not hang intimately together, but [that] they give faith in the emotions expressed.” In short, “Shakespeare takes leaps from one soul state to another and falls into the contradictions of convention and artifice.” Next, he will turn for further support to the early critics of Shakespeare and remark—“It was the tragedy as a whole in which these critics were interested, rather than the leading character.” “They knew no psychology”, and they hit nearer than Shakespeare, for “the dramatist’s chief thought was not that [character portrayal] but, as it should be, of the play as a whole.” These chronological glances into the past, together with a reference to sources, constitute his second historical argument.

Now rapidly may I note Mr. Stoll’s application of his two historical, explanatory arguments—particularly that of the dramatic conventions—to the two inconsistencies pointed out above: that is, to Shylock and Othello.

With Shylock Mr. Stoll uses the chronological argument mainly. Orthodox criticism calls Shylock a pathetic martyr, but Shakespeare made him a comic villain. The Jews, banished from England in 1290, did not return until the rule of Cromwell, in the century after Shakespeare. In 1594 a Jewish physician had nearly killed the Queen, and the Elizabethans scorned and ridiculed the race. Shakespeare then puts Shylock, Jew, miser, and moneylender, in a comedy and stamps him by all the devices of his dramaturgy: Shylock says he is a villain, the characters say he is a villain, and he gets the villain’s due in the end. His ravings about his daughter the people laughed at, and he was made up on the stage like a witch, with a red beard. Supported by *history* (declares Mr. Stoll), Shakespeare constructs a character Shylock, to fit a conventional Elizabethan type—a comic villain—and in that *historical* conformation, not through psychology, the inconsistency of Shylock disappears.

Othello, after all the comment of centuries, is easily explained through the utilization of the Elizabethan dramatic convention (Mr. Stoll's favorite method of explanation) of the Caluminator Credited. A character, of "free and open nature", may by the proper instigation of the type villain, be made almost instantaneously to believe in his wife's dishonor, and become insanely jealous, in accordance with the Elizabethan humour. The same thing appears in *Much Ado* and *Cymbeline* of Shakespeare, in Greene's *Orlando Furioso*, Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*, and Dryden's *Conquest of Granada*. Jealousy was not born and bred in the hero but "through immemorial convention it is instilled into his soul by a villain's wiles." The cycle of the convention is completed at the end of the play quite as abruptly—"the slanderer was believed that there might be a story, and the slanderer was repudiated that the story might end." Leonato, *Much Ado*, and Gloster, *Lear*,—two fathers discrediting their own children without hesitation—"prove conclusively how *unpsychological* the device is in Shakespeare."

Orthodox critics (Mr. Stoll now turning to refutation by his third and subordinate type of argument, direct logic) who argue that Othello's one weakness was trustfulness and that by this alone he fell before the compelling arts of Iago, must logically say, then, that Othello's *trust* in Iago argues, *a priori*, *suspicion* toward Desdemona—whom, on the contrary, Othello should trust at least as much as if not more than he does Iago. As a matter of fact, the compelling arts of Iago are not so compelling after all. He gives no proof for the first two hundred and fifty lines of the temptation scene, and then recounts a dream. An honest man—which Iago is not—would make a clean breast of the situation—which Iago does not. And the normal reaction of Othello should have been, with a blow—"Sir, this is my wife"—"putting an end to the tragedy in Act Three." That the critics will have it as they do "is in keeping with their philosophical rather than historical method, their indifference to the history of the drama and to the greater approximation of the dramatic art in modern times to the realities of human life and character, and [with] their resolute intention to discover a reflection of the world as it is or as we see it in what was devised and

primarily fitted for a highly conventional stage." *Othello* is a play of great emotional situations not hanging intimately together, and the sudden aberration of Othello cannot be explained psychologically. It is the Elizabethan *dramatic convention* again, not psychology, which accounts for the Shakespearean character's inconsistency.

To sum it all up, Mr. Stoll does not hesitate to point out that, in spite of the grandeur and glory of genius, there are some very evident inconsistencies in several of Shakespeare's most famous characters. He *never* disposes of these psychologically—he does not attempt to—but he *accounts* for, *excuses* them, if you will, by a fundamental historical explanation—to which all others are really subordinate—namely, the imposing influence on Shakespeare of Elizabethan dramatic convention. Thus genius is subordinate to convention and reaches heights only as it—to repeat—"is initiated into the newest mysteries of the craft."

III

I am now ready to return to Mr. Stoll's unfortunate participation in Mr. Robertson's two deplored shortcomings—the *confusions* of the Shakespeare sceptic in general, I believe: an æsthetic "blind spot" and a tendency to "fall a victim to the fascinations of his own critical system." First it is possible to point out that Mr. Stoll lacks somewhat "the faculty of experiencing a work of art." He very startlingly turns his back on his own dramatic convention explanation of Shakespeare's inconsistent characters, contradicts his own theory of life and art, and from the viewpoint of æsthetics, even utters some astonishingly qualifying statements with regard to these same characters.

In the discourse of his discussion of Hamlet he declares, "Hamlet cannot step out of the picture on the floor"—"the stage is not the world." "The tragic fault", he continues, "was brought to light by Scotch professors and sentimentalists and the rest of the Romantacists who knew not and loved not the stage and its ways." "Every audience [Mr. Stoll is quoting Richardson, 1784] has hitherto taken part with Hamlet—

the voice of the people, in poetry, as well as in politics, deserves some attention.' To be sure it does—was it not for the people that the play was penned?" If Hamlet, then, is "bound by the dramatist's potent spell—not flesh and blood and bones", and if, as Mr. Stoll himself remarks with some triumph, he was unquestioned dramatically for nearly two hundred years, why does Mr. Stoll immediately proceed to take Hamlet's soliloquies "out of the picture on the floor" and dissect them psychologically for seventeen pages in order to prove Hamlet heroic? Is not Mr. Stoll inconsistent with his own theory of life and art?

But that unfortunately is not the only *lapsus mentis* Mr. Stoll has made, æsthetically inconsistent with himself. In his treatment of Shylock he proceeds: "Hamlet and Shylock must be to us what they were to him [Shakespeare]." "Steadily the Jewishness of Shylock is kept before us." "Shylock is the only full length caricature he [Shakespeare] ever drew, and he is rather burlesque." Then, within one page, "Shakespeare adds a *cozy individuality* [may I underline?] beyond the satiric scheme. Thus the logic of characterization is disturbed but the reality of it is heightened." That is a startling qualification—Mr. Stoll is returning upon himself. His falling back for defence on the possible multiplication of the "two-fold truth" will hardly do. He has consented to the individuality of Shylock, "beyond the satiric scheme." And when he adds a little recklessly on the following page that "I have pointed out traces of unconscious deviation from his [Shakespeare's] purpose and inadvertent relenting toward the mark of his ridicule," Shylock stands forth in spite of Mr. Stoll himself and the dramatic convention explanation as *æsthetically* satisfactory.

Othello presents the same inconsistent *æsthetic* return upon the convention theory of explaining inconsistencies. Mr. Stoll admits: "By sheer potency of art Othello, Iago, Desdemona, and Emilia maintain throughout their incredible spiritual vicissitudes *their individual* tone [may I underline]." "Their passions speak ever true." "In the rhythm, the accent, or intonation, the choice of word or figure there is often *something* [I venture to underline again] that stamps them." What is

that "something"? Is it not genius *expressing* "the emotion of value"—or, as Mr. Stoll himself admits, "that faculty which lends form to a statue, a picture or even a song"? Othello and Iago make *statements* of values—in their parts in the play—but the *expression* of values is in the soul of the poet, Shakespeare, represented by these living figures, each with his own "individual tone." Mr. Stoll, after establishing conventions to explain the inconsistencies of these characters, is now *æsthetically* satisfied himself with Shakespeare's characters. Shakespeare is then artistically exonerated.

As to the second tendency of the sceptic—to "fall a victim to the fascinations of his own critical system", Mr. Stoll is a deplorably admirable example. In fact, he is so prone to this fault that I imagine he eclipses Mr. Robertson himself.

The best instance of Mr. Stoll's "undermining so diligently" is in *Hamlet*. There he applies his favorite Elizabethan dramatic conventions to the top of his bent, so that at the end he has completely convinced himself that Hamlet's soliloquies are, consistently, the utterances of a heroic Kyd revenger balked by existing circumstances. "Hamlet is meant for an heroic, not a pathetic figure."

Now whether or not Hamlet is more heroic than pathetic in the play is not of moment in this discussion. As a matter of fact, I think that even Mr. Stoll and Mr. Clutton-Brock agree in the matter of the importance of the Ghost motif, and I personally rather appreciate that because my own teacher, Professor Kittredge, emphasized that point repeatedly. But while Mr. Clutton-Brock gives the Ghost all due credit—perhaps too much, almost Freudian—Mr. Stoll slights the motif and depends upon his dramatic conventions to obliterate the troublesome (heroically) soliloquies. And that is where Mr. Stoll unfortunately seems to "hoist himself."

His list of conventions—other than those already given—includes the following, of bearing upon the soliloquies:—

1. Soliloquies are to be taken at their face value.
2. Heroes do not halt between opinions.
3. Heroes' words need not reflect character.

Now, obviously, if all three of these conventions are applied to

Hamlet's soliloquies, Bradley's "melancholy" Hamlet, Clutton-Brock's neurotic Hamlet, and Stoll's "heroic" Hamlet all disappear. If Hamlet says, "What a rogue and peasant slave am I" at the beginning of one soliloquy and closes the same with a resolve, "the play's the thing," the second convention above is contradicted. If the soliloquy is to be taken purely at its face value, why, then, should Mr. Stoll arbitrarily choose the last words to represent Hamlet any more than the first? And if the soliloquies do not necessarily represent any aspect of Hamlet's character at all, why was Shakespeare so inept as to waste all this space? No, I should say Mr. Stoll has carried his dramatic convention idea a little too far—"has fallen a victim to the fascinations of his own critical system." He, like Mr. Robertson, unfortunately has been "swept off his feet."

IV

As a matter of fact, if one were to begin tearing Shakespeare's characters "out of the picture on the floor" to dissect them psychologically, casting aside all thought of their general æsthetic perfection as art, the results would be a convincing argument, *reductio ad absurdum*, against the process itself. As the *New Statesman* for March 25, 1922, remarks, "Sensible critics have worn their nibs out discussing Shakespeare's inconsistencies." "The amount of subtle speculation which has been wasted upon discrepancies in his [Shakespeare's] character drawing is appalling."

Consider, to exemplify the *ad absurdum*, the number of character inconsistencies in the comedies. In *Midsummer Night's Dream* Helena and Hermia, normally peaceful characters at the beginning, very suddenly nearly tear each other's hair toward the end. In the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* Silvia, a thoughtful person, does not thank Valentine for saving her in the forest. The Duke asks Proteus to slander Valentine, and Proteus in ten lines consents to slur his friend (comparable to a similar situation in *Taming of the Shrew*). Valentine excuses Proteus's treachery in about fifteen lines, and Proteus, of such a character, should never have been given Silvia at the end: to say nothing of Valentine and Julia entering matrimony without ever having

loved each other (there are similar situations in *King John* and *The Winter's Tale*). In the *Comedy of Errors* there is no natural emotional reaction for the meeting of Ægeon and Emilia at the end, an inconsistency repeated in *Pericles*, *Much Ado*, *The Tempest*, and *The Winter's Tale*. In *As You Like It* the Duke's sudden anger at Rosalind matches Leontes' in *The Winter's Tale*. Phoebe—like Perdita in *The Winter's Tale* and Miranda in *The Tempest*—talks and writes in a style totally beyond her. And Oliver, the "bloody brother", is given sweet Celia at the end (compare with *Two Gentlemen of Verona* above). The device of disguising Rosalind as a boy—so with Julia, Viola, Portia, and Imogen—always is dubious for the character and should be necessarily included as an inconsistency.

To continue with the comedies, in *Measure for Measure* Lucio, a negatively respectable courtier at the beginning, modelled apparently somewhat on Horatio as friend of Claudio, at the end of the play becomes a smutty, mouthing butt, quite in the fashion of Parolles and Falstaff. Isabella—"that impossible she"—pure Christian pleader for mercy at the beginning—falls gladly in with the plot to substitute Marianna for herself in a liaison with Angelo—a second Helena (*All's Well*). Claudio eclipses Hamlet in his speeches on the life hereafter, yet to escape that life the dastard begs his sister Isabella to submit to Angelo's vile advances. In *The Winter's Tale* the meeting of Leontes and Hermione is slighted at the end (compare with the *Comedy of Errors* above). Leontes' sudden anger and jealousy match similar aberrations of Othello, Claudio in *Much Ado*, and Posthumous in *Cymbeline*. Perdita is a second impossible Phoebe, and Paulina marries an unloved Camillo, as did Julia and Valentine in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and Lewis and Blanche in *King John*. In *All's Well that Ends Well*, Helena extols virginity at the beginning and calmly substitutes herself for a whore at the end, to capture an unheroic Bertram. Diana's final intrigue always seemed to me a little bit too "high class" Italian subtlety for such an insignificant person, to say nothing of Bertram's suddenly dropping her for Helena.

The *Taming of the Shrew* shows another erratic betrayal of love, like that in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and the *Merry*

Wives of Windsor displays at least a rather peculiar Falstaff. The *Merchant of Venice*, as Mr. Stoll points out, has an inconsistent Shylock; *Much Ado* has a suddenly violent Claudio and Leonato, and a slighted love reunion of Hero and Claudio; *Cymbeline* has a repenting villain and an unnatural husband, Posthumous. *The Tempest* has an impossible Miranda, and *Pericles*, with its last three acts written by Shakespeare, shows a slighted meeting as in *Comedy of Errors* and *The Winter's Tale*. So much for the main inconsistencies of the comedies: thirty-five in all, accounting for parallel situations.

There are perhaps not so many inconsistencies in the tragedies but enough to show the absurdity of the search. *Othello* has already been discussed. Mr. Stoll finds at least three unruly characters, Emilia, Iago, and Othello himself. *Macbeth* presents three inconsistencies. Macbeth himself, Mr. Stoll says, is not psychologically a murderer—as Iago is not psychologically a criminal. But Macbeth's "Out, out brief candle" alone puts him, I should say, beyond the pale of Iago. Lady Macbeth, as unsexed as Richard III, is inconsistent in being overdrawn, but her inconsistency is relieved somewhat by her break at the end—a situation which Richard III is never allowed to experience. Finally in *Macbeth* it has always seemed to me quite out of character for Macduff to leave his wife unprotected so that the plot of the play can proceed apparently uninterrupted. It does not seem plausible to sacrifice a noble character for the sake of a somewhat melodramatic plot scheme.

In *King Lear* there are possibly two inconsistencies. Lear gets suddenly angry, like Leontes and Posthumous, and Gloster suddenly repudiates Edgar, his legitimate son, as Leonato rejects Hero in *Much Ado*. Capulet's poetry in *Romeo and Juliet* is impossible for such a character, and the Romeo who kills Tybalt weeps like a fool in Friar Lawrence's cell. Hamlet is inconsistent—as several generations have noted—but I do not think Mr. Stoll or any other critic will ever harmonize psychologically Hamlet's "Now I could drink hot blood" with "What a rogue and peasant slave am I", and other such amazingly contrasting utterances. Polonius the critic has mentioned as an inconsistent minor character, like Emilia in *Othello*. That even for the

pleasure of an Elizabethan audience Polonius can be allowed, consistently, to be both a dignified statesman and a Falstaffian butt at the same time is not very credible. Cleopatra has been noted by at least one critic as a different woman in Acts I and IV, the original Cleopatra suddenly disappearing at about two-thirds the way through the play. Coriolanus, similarly, weakens rather abruptly under the appeals of the women at the end. And Brutus is no longer 'an honorable man' after the assassination of Cæsar. The total number of these suggested inconsistencies in the tragedies is fifteen.

For the historical plays, in *King John*, as in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Winter's Tale*, there is a very sudden 'falling in love'. Teachers have pointed out that Arthur is too self-possessed in the face of threatened torture and that Shakespeare suddenly made King John go mad without sufficient character preparation, to the ultimate weakness of the plot. Similarly in *Henry IV*, Part I, there is an abrupt change in Prince Hal (compare also in *Henry IV*, Pt. II); Falstaff's change Mr. Stoll himself has noted.

Richard III young Shakespeare certainly overdrew. Thirteen times in the play Richard explains his villainous propensities. Richard II rants wildly at the beginning of the play and then submits to Bolingbroke in utter weakness near the end. In *Henry IV*, Part II, the Prince undergoes another swift change for the better without much preparation for such a complete reversal, and in *Henry V* the young king again is inconsistent in his silly wooing of Katherine after presenting such a masterful character everywhere else in the play. Samson may fall before Delilah—but not in nursery French. To sum up, in all the historical plays there are at least nine possible inconsistencies.

In all the authoritative plays of Shakespeare then—comedies, tragedies and histories—there may be pointed out at least some fifty-nine character inconsistencies. Now why should sceptical historical and textual critics continue the useless task of trying to explain psychologically all these apparent shortcomings of Shakespeare's genius? By exact count—favoring Mr. Stoll as much as possible—I concluded that *all* his Elizabethan dramatic conventions will account for but ten of the fifty-nine. Hence

there is plenty of work to be done in this field if the critic really wants to throw overboard completely the generally *aesthetic* aspect of Shakespeare's creations—as *art*.

V

In conclusion may I emphasize my sincere respect for Mr. Stoll, by echoing Mr. Archer's apostrophe to Mr. Robertson. "He [Mr. R.] is a critic to be reckoned with, if ever there was one. I am far from suggesting that his labours in the field of textual criticism have been misdirected. Mr. Robertson has, it seems to me, substantially, advanced the work of discrimination, and many of his results are likely to meet with permanent acceptance." The same may be said of Mr. Stoll in the purely historical field. The number of important Elizabethan dramatic conventions he has accumulated by thorough and persevering study are in themselves of vital and permanent interest to every specialist in the period.

Among these conventions are, in addition to the few already mentioned, several others not hitherto fully discussed:

1. There was no Elizabethan 'psychology' (in our sense).
2. Plots were not developed from character.
3. *End* of a play was very important.
4. Stage 'business' must always be noted—'blue lights', etc.
5. Heroes were free from fate.
6. Hero was never a fool.
7. Acquaintance before love was unimportant.
8. Gamut of emotions often occurred in one play.
9. Antic disposition was a customary device.
10. Self-deception was generally made evident.

All these historical discoveries in themselves throw various and brilliant rays of light on the whole study of Elizabethan dramaturgy.

As to their use, let us return a moment to Mr. Archer. This ultra-modern critic's *The Old Drama and the New* could well have profited by some of the historical knowledge of Mr. Stoll, who reviewed the book in the *Modern Language Review*, April, 1925. It is surely to be regretted that Mr. Stoll and Mr. Archer did not collaborate, for then would have appeared a

really formidable study of The Old Drama and the New. Perhaps Mr. Desmond MacCarthy of the *New Statesman* will sometime submit to the torture. Meanwhile Mr. Stoll might use his facts, if he will pardon my presuming to suggest, to relate English drama of the age of Elizabeth to other contemporary drama, or to prove, better than has any historical critic so far, that Shakespeare was typically a product of his age. There are certainly numerous possibilities ahead for Mr. Stoll.³

In short, I should declare emphatically that Mr. Stoll's knowledge of Elizabethan dramatic technique is much more interesting and valuable in and for itself, than as applied to character inconsistencies—that Mr. Stoll has, in other words, opened a field of Shakespearean study which is both fertile and extensive in itself and much too valuable and illuminating to be so misdirected into an inconsequential exposition of Shakespeare's inconsistent character portrayal. The same, with less emphasis, might be remarked of such an historico-psychological study as Professor Schücking's *Die Charakter-probleme bei Shakespeare*. But until Shakespeare's individual genius has been packed up and dispatched to one of the seven spheres where its music belongs, the two fields, psychology and history, might better, with regard to Shakespeare, be kept apart. And it looks to me quite certain that all the brilliant subtilizations of Oliver's soliloquies and Cæsar's braggadocio by Professor L. L. Schücking and his cohort will remain, if not redirected, relatively "flat, stale, and unprofitable" in comparison with the rich vein of scholarship now opened by the persevering genius of Mr. Stoll.

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³ Consider, for example, the relative value of Mr. Stoll's latest studies (in the Macmillan book): "Characterization" and "Method in Comedy".

EDOUARD ESTAUNIÉ: NOVELIST OF LONELINESS

In Edouard Estaunié, of l'Académie Française, the French are discovering not only one of their most profound psychologists, but also one of their most original thinkers in present-day fiction. Since the appearance a few years ago of *L'Appel de la Route*, recently published in translation by Boni and Liveright, no writer has called forth more reviews in France, except, of course, Marcel Proust, nor has anyone fared better at the hands of the critics than has this painter of lonely people. Because of his exceedingly clear insight into this very frequent type of humanity, and because of his concentration upon this type almost to the exclusion of all others, he has created for himself a place unique and enviable among his contemporaries. He chooses people we have all watched pass by; people, too, with whom we have all been intimately associated, people whom we would gladly have known except that a barrier forbade us any exchange of sympathy or friendship. They live their lives alone, and, for the most part, are misunderstood and disliked except for a few sympathetic natures, one of the most kindly of whom is Estaunié himself. He has penetrated into the depths of their souls as has no one else. His theme, virtually the same as that of Sherwood Anderson, deals with family relationships, and with the total isolation from one another in which the various members of the same family habitually dwell.

Estaunié gained his first recognition through two powerful psychological studies revealing the crushing effect upon the minds of two young men of an out-worn educational system in both Church and State schools. The first of these, *L'Empreinte*, published in 1896 and crowned by the Academy, is in many ways his best work. It arraigns the system of religious education practised in the Jesuit schools on the score of weakening individual initiative and substituting for it obedience and authority. Such teaching caused the seminarist, Léonard Clan, to marvel at the assurance with which the other novices welcomed the moment of taking the eternal vows. Shortly before the fatal day a sort of terror seized him, which, however, a visit to

Paris dispelled. This glimpse of the outside world was the real cause of his refusal to enter the Church. All that he undertook thereafter proved a failure, for he found himself out of harmony with the world. He never loved, but in his loneliness he thought he would adopt the easy morals of his friends, a venture which merely added bitterness to his sadness. After seven years he met his former confessor and in anger defiantly declared, "I know of but one irreparable act: the assault by you upon my boyish conscience." Notwithstanding this rebellion, the influence of the priest had been like a poison, of which he could not purge his soul. At last he returned to the monastery, broken in spirit, unfit for life in the world, and, in spite of the stamp of the Jesuit upon his conscience, unfit for Holy Orders. A more powerful study of the tragic effect of youthful impressions upon after-life does not exist in modern fiction.

In *Le Ferment*, 1899, Estaunié, like Taine and Barrès, protests against too technical an education for all classes, and launches a formidable attack against the public schools which foster a false system of education. This crushing out of individual initiative is at the base of almost all that is wrong in France, since boys are brought up to be a part of the mechanism of the State, as Clan would have been of the Church. The book paints the sad fate of the youth who has prepared himself for one particular kind of work, and then finds those places already taken. He is left to drift into moral degeneration and to become a part of the ferment that swells the ranks of the discontented.

The chief interest of the book, however, lies in the carefully studied psychological analysis that reveals the motives and ways by which Julien Dartot rids himself of a conscience that interferes with his material progress. It is the complete record of the demoralization of a young man, surpassing in its vividness and intensity anything of its sort in French literature since Stendhal's portrayal of Julien Sorel.

Estaunié showed in *La Vie Secrète*, 1909, that loneliness is the result not only of suppressed desires, but of love and of hate, of jealousies and of vices that have never been confessed and which would no longer exist if we were capable of confessing

them. Everything in our natures that has never been expressed, the thoughts even that lie hidden in the depths of our glances, all render us complete strangers even to those we love best. In this novel, too, he undertook to expand Bergson's theory that ordinary life is composed of actions which are largely automatic, and of habits and conventions that crust over free expression. Only at moments of extraordinary crises or of deep emotion do we seem to burst through this crust, and then only does the real self determine our actions.

This idea is brought out also in the very remarkable novel, *L'Ascension de Monsieur Baslèvre*, 1920, an account of an idealized devotion which changed a sordid and selfish recluse into a sympathetic soul. The book's underlying thought is revealed in the words of Doctor Michon, "Do I know what being deep hidden within you and unknown even to yourself is being repressed by the bearing which your professional existence imposes upon you, as well as these thirty-two years of service of which you are so proud, but during which one could count perhaps thirty-two hours when you have been truly yourself? Let there come some incident or other, some chance meeting, the fate which watches for us all at the corner of the street, ah, how those thirty-two years will fly away to leave the man who existed from the very first, the only one which wanted to live." Toward the end of the story the same doctor says of Baslèvre's sorrow at the death of the woman he loved, "For two hours I saw the heart of a man. It was sublime. If the past had produced but that it would have been sacred." This point of view brings the author to an apotheosis of human suffering, for suffering is the crisis that reveals the soul of man and exalts him to noble and beautiful sacrifice. Such had been his conception even in his first two rather unimportant novels, *Un Simple*, 1891, and *Bonne Dame*, 1892, and in the very beautiful story, "Les Jauffrelins," 1917, one of the three tales composing *Les Solitudes*, where loneliness had its cause in the solitude of country life.

Estaunié's characters are forever contending against some power of repression. Léonard Clan and Julien Dartot had their personalities repressed by the system of education to

which they had been subjected. In other novels this repression might well be given a Freudian explanation. Stéphane Deschantres, in *Un Simple*, though physically mature, was helpless against the dominating will of his mother. His love for her crushed out his own individuality, and impelled him to sacrifice his life on the altar of filial devotion. It was Bonne Dame's love for her father and the nature of her early childhood that so moulded her disposition that she could not throw off a certain reserve with her daughter that never showed itself with men. Although in *L'Epave*, 1902, we feel that somehow Mademoiselle Wimereux has been psychoanalyzed, and that she knows full well the significance of her devotion to her father's memory, yet she is helpless to break with his ideals even though they mean total isolation for her. Baslèvre's reserve and loneliness were due to the death of his mother, for whom he had a boyish passion and whose death occurred toward the end of his adolescent period. His sorrow proved so poignant that it stifled all other passion in his heart. He had never known any other love until he met Claire, and he was drawn to her because she reminded him of his mother. Although in the foregoing novels this element of repression suggests the parent-complex, *Les Choses voient*, 1913, which is not unlike *Wuthering Heights* in its intermingling of dwelling and inhabitants, the repression gradually becomes all of one's past. "It is the past with its secrets that closes in upon us and restricts our lives and eventually crushes them." A servant's honest love for her master proves the fate that wrecks his home and ends his family. She strove futilely with fate, for she failed to reckon with the past and with its chain of circumstances which form habits and mould dispositions which in turn determine the destiny of us all.

Out of such settings Estaunié has built up a philosophy of determinism as absolute as that of Hardy. Two aspects, however, seem to indicate a special trend in Estaunié's determinism. Even in his first novel we find Madame Deschantres declaring that a family is only "a congregation of people associated by nature so as more easily to work each other harm." A variation of this saying is the theme of "Monsieur Chamel", the second story in *Les Solitudes*, where Champel affirms, "we were no longer

husband and wife; we were two hates associated so as better to rend one another." In *L'Appel de la Route* this idea has a broader application wherein our neighbors prove to be such a group. In fact, the author's doctrine throughout his novels seems to be that persons, although unwittingly, exist in order to render evil and not good to one another. To offset this gloomy view of our earthly relations he has developed a belief in spiritism, according to which, however harmful our friends may have been to us on earth, after death they become spirits in constant contact with us, befriending us with their sympathy and help. The conclusion of "Les Jauffrelins" is particularly significant, for here for the first time Estaunié strikes the note that softens his determinism and enables him to look beyond the pitiless power of the past in fashioning our destinies to a future life where the soul is at peace, and is no longer alone. In a passionate burst of exultation he declares that, "solitude is not merely a force, it is also the profound refuge of our lost affections. By an act divine, that which separates the living seems on the contrary to throw down the walls around those who have passed away. We do not fully know the dead except in the solitude in which they have left us. As long as they were alive, we knew not what they were; scarcely have they gone than they become an open page which the lonely heart can easily decipher." Such was the case with Baslèvre. His love, a sort of spiritual companionship, came to a complete expression only after the death of his beloved, for then only was he permitted to know the full beauty of her character and to communicate without reserve with her spirit.

There is also a strain of bitter pessimism in Estaunié which comes out in his constantly repeated question, "à quoi bon?" The purpose of *L'Appel de la Route* seems to answer this query; and to solve the great enigma of life according to the philosophy he had developed in his previous novels. He imagines that three friends meet in one of the cafés on the Boulevards in Paris, and in a casual conversation it is discovered that each of them has witnessed a part of the same drama, and what one does not know about it the other two can add. Duclos, a doctor, argues that fate is unjust; Tinant, a professor, that it is at least

incomprehensible; the author himself says rather that it is not understood and promises them an explanation at the end of the story. At Semur there lived isolated and unknown the strange Lormier family. Early in the story Duclos, the young doctor, is called to the deathbed of Madame Lormier who, though devout, had been hard and calculating toward her family, and had withdrawn herself completely from the affections of her husband, who worked persistently in the solitude of his laboratory. All his love was centered in his daughter, Genevieve, who, plain and unattractive, enjoyed no social contacts. From her lonely high tower room she watched the world go by. She knew when a stranger, René de la Galardière, arrived at Semur to accept a position in a local bank. One rainy day, having gone to the station to dispatch a package, she met him, and he asked her permission to accompany her back to the village under the protection of her umbrella. This encounter and the ensuing walk proved the caprice of fate that determined the lot of several persons living in quite different parts of France, who were utter strangers to one another. From it arose Mademoiselle Lormier's love for René, and the resulting passion for revenge. Later she learned the facts of his birth, and by a chance remark incited him to search out the truth. His love for his mother, which had always circumscribed his actions and restricted any freedom of self-development, made it impossible, as in the case of Stéphane Deschantres' love for his mother, for him to endure the truth about her life, so he enlisted and was killed shortly afterwards in Africa. Genevieve felt responsible for his death. She had never been able to throw off a cold reserve toward her father, which she had inherited from her mother. Her secret remorse now created an even greater barrier between her and her father, to whom she had never communicated her love. She sought solace in a Carmelite convent, and her death a few months later left him in utter solitude.

Whatever Estaunié may say at the close of this novel in the words of the priest who justifies suffering as "the call of the way" detaching us from the affairs of this world and preparing us for the larger and deeper life hereafter, it is the philosophy of Duclos and of Tinant that the story exemplifies: "by our very existence

we cause suffering unto others", and the reason is incomprehensible. Although there is a certain romantic glorification in the deaths of René and Genevieve for which they have been prepared by suffering, Monsieur Lormier and Madame Manchon, René's mother, seem to have sunk into a morbid and pessimistic scepticism. So the author's conclusion appears to contradict his contention at the beginning of the book. Madame Manchon, no doubt because of her sin, was denied all power of communing with the spirit of René; but Monsieur Lormier, on the other hand, did feel the presence of his daughter near him and experienced the comforting assurance of her sympathy and understanding as he never had during her life.

In a more recent novel, *L'Infirmé aux mains de lumière*, 1923, a delightful little study of only one hundred and eighty pages, Estaunié offers another explanation for human sorrow and loneliness, an explanation far more pleasing to the poetic fancy than the ponderous and theological one set forth in *L'Appel de la Route*. He has a distinct feeling for the café as a social institution and senses its importance as a factor in French life, and so the opening scene of this story takes place also in a café, but at Bordeaux this time. There two lonely clerks form an acquaintance that develops into a lifelong friendship. There, too, starts the beautiful story of sacrifice of a brother's happiness and independence for the sake of an invalid sister. His actions are soon determined by the caprices of a fate which he has no choice but to follow. His sister's death leaves him free, but at an age when it is too late to pick up the threads of a life long ago turned out of its natural channel. This life of lonely sacrifice had been like a flower once discovered by the brother and sister in their childhood blooming all by itself on the top of an isolated rock. "What good (*à quoi bon*) such a beautiful thing which nobody could see? It existed merely in order that the world might be beautiful when the sun looked down upon it." Thus having created beauty because we have lived, we doubt not that the sun does look down into our souls, and we are rewarded.

In *Le Labyrinthe*, 1924, which ranks among his major novels, Estaunié plunges once more into the hopelessness of situations

brought about by want of frankness toward those whom we love most. The secrets kept buried in the heart, no matter from how worthy a motive, breed suspicion and jealousies and finally ruin life's happiest prospects. It is impossible for love to reign in a family where secrets exist even for honor's sake. The nobler the characters involved, the greater the sorrow and utter dejection when a final confession becomes inevitable. Confidence has been shaken and can never be restored. The same thought is developed in "La Découverte", one of a collection of short stories under the title of *Le Silence dans la Campagne*, 1926, where lack of open confession between a boy of nine and his sister cost them each other's love throughout life. Their strict but loving grandmother by her severity of a moment created the situation whereby complete confidence between these two children disappeared forever, and their love could never be revived. In *Le Labyrinthe* it was love between husband and wife that was thus blighted. They were caught in the labyrinth of suspicion, and and no amount of explanation could light them out of it. The presence of the husband's younger brother, of whom he was very fond, seemed strangely to add to the darkness that filled their souls, so he departed to lead a lonely existence abroad. This novel presents one of the author's most powerful studies in the secret causes of life's deepest sorrows, in which he again strives to prove that the past absolutely determines the future. It contains all the philosophic determinism of *La Vie Secrète*, and none of the optimism the author argues for in *L'Appel de la Route* and in *L'Infirmes aux mains de lumière*. However, it offers a far more compelling story than either of these.

Except in *L'Empreinte* and in *Le Ferment*, it is to be observed in all these studies of human suffering that the anguish of heart, arises not from sexual love, but from legitimate family relationships. People suffer because such is their destiny and simply because other people live and act around them, but this suffering, to those who are morally capable, is not futile as it makes for fortitude and grandeur of soul. Estaunié would seem almost to be following the ideas of Anatole France, who says in *Le Jardin d'Epicure*, "Suffering and love are the twin sources of the inexhaustible beauty of the world. We owe to suffering all the good

there is in us, all that has value in life, we owe it pity, we owe it courage, we owe it all our virtues."

Estaunié believes profoundly that the soul is something eternal and mysterious which fears to reveal itself *tout nu*. There is going on within us a transition of soul of which we remain totally ignorant until such time as fate shall decree. Only under the stress of a terrible crisis resulting from suffering does the real soul of those who are morally worthy rise above all elements of repression, of whatever sort, that determine their lives, and then it gleams forth as essentially good. At such moments of exaltation one beholds pure spirit which no longer exists in solitude, but communicates freely with other spirits, and throbs with the joy of living.

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IN THE BEGINNING

What time the new-born World arose,
A pure-shaped lily out of pristine mold,
Watching its perfect petals slow unfold,
What thought enthralled its Maker's mind—who knows?
Think you He smiled surprise, as one who sows
A seed, all nameless, in the sun-warm soil,
And wakes to see undreamed-of pride uncoil,
Wide-eyed with joy as it more gorgeous grows?
Or did He gaze as one in whose deep brain
Some ponderous plan expanded day by day
Until, at last, it burst its bounds and lay
Complete before his eyes, and who, insane
With sudden ecstasy,—the dream come true,—
His face transfigured, cried, *I knew, I knew!*

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POETRY AND THE ABSOLUTE

Mr. John Crowe Ransom, writing about the disorder of modern poetry,¹ discusses the relation of the poet to his world within the useful philosophical terms, monism and dualism. Mr. Ransom's remarks extend to a revaluation of certain English poets who, until the school of criticism headed by Mr. T. S. Eliot became articulate, were shelved as minor and went unread in the influence of more immediately purposive poets, like Tennyson and Browning. Mr. Ransom proposes, in the classical spirit, a warily sceptical dualism as the metaphysics of these better poets. They soon found out that absolute identification of self with a discrete world was impossible. To preserve the integrity, the honesty, of thought at all they had to be contented with expedient rearrangements of symbols from that world—with these as provisional solutions of it, perhaps alterable at the writing of the next poem. Mr. Ransom's note, with its implications, contains much to be said about the conditions under which a poet may know anything.

It implies a brief for a sound epistemology of poetry—but only as the specific possibility of poetic knowledge enters into the general possibility of any sort of knowledge. It describes general intelligence, not specific poetic intelligence. For, in explaining the relation between the poet and his world, Mr. Ransom fails to touch the relation between the poet, or the reader, and the poem. This relation, as poetry tends towards purity, conduces to an absolutism the problem of which lies outside the metaphysical enquiry into the nature of reality. To understand this relation is doubtless the chief end of criticism. And here the pertinency of the terms, monism and dualism, obviously disappears.

The relation may be examined to some advantage in a poem like Donne's "The Funeral". But a more doubtful success might attend an analysis of a romantic poem of revery. To think of poetry in its purity one need not think of

A damsel with a dulcimer. . . .

¹ *The Calendar of Modern Letters* (London), August, 1925.

Another word than poetry, perhaps Coleridge's "fancy", may be more accurate. In a poem like "Kubla Khan" one might too easily grant that one term of the relation, the poem, at least resembles an absolute in its character of not reaching in any way into the practical, relative world. But Donne created a permanent focus of emotional reference out of the disorder of feeling started in him by frustrated love. He did not wish to discover an escape from emotion; he did not wish to dissolve it; he did not care to write a "Kubla Khan". The world of "The Funeral" is a section of the known world, the world knowable through one of Mr. Ransom's, or the history of philosophy's, general possibilities of knowing anything—it is irrelevant which one. But there is a particular quality of the poem that makes it wholly unlike the portion of the knowable world for which it stands; as a portion it is complete, it is finite. There is nothing beyond it; while in the current of ordinary experience the last consequent is always a fresh antecedent: the practical world of science has no dimensions, no frame, no form. "The Funeral" has form—completeness, finality, absolutism. And it is great art because its absolute quality is created out of the perceptions not of an easy, imaginable world, but of the accepted, common-sense world.

Whoever comes to shroud me, do not harm
 Nor question much
 That subtle wreath of hair about mine arm;
 The mystery, the sign you must not touch,
 For 'tis my outward soul,
 Viceroy to that which, unto heaven being gone,
 Will leave this to control
 And keep these limbs, her provinces, from dissolution.

For if the sinewy thread my brain lets fall
 Through every part
 Can tie those parts, and make me one of all;
 Those hairs, which upward grew, and strength and art
 Have from a better brain
 Can better do't: except she meant that I
 By this should know my pain,
 As prisoners then are manacled, when they're condemned to die.
 Whate'er she meant by't, bury it with me,
 For since I am

Love's martyr, it might breed idolatry
If into other hands these reliques came.
As 'twas humility
T' afford it all that a soul can do,
So 'tis some bravery
That, since you would have none of me,
I bury some of you.

The material is the expected fact of death, a capricious woman, a lock of her hair. But even if the poet, in the ordinary perceiving of these things, cannot be a "monist", cannot get at an immediate absolute, he will not yet despair. He is not confined to ordinary experience, to the incompleteness of the moral situation. He may contemplate them later in terms of form, in the absolute into which he has created them.² He may then, if the phrase have any meaning at all, feel himself to be "at one" with them in his poem. It is probably through the unique accessibility furnished by the poem to exclusive attention to the perceptions which it concentrates—through the "more than usual order" given them—that the disturbance in frustrated love is absolved.

This constitutes a meaning of the phrase, "the superior experience of art." The artist constructs the possibility of this kind of experience first of all for himself. If the perceptions which go to make up the poem, however, are perfectly realized, presented free of the disturbance out of which they have sprung, the poem will provide the same experience for others. But if the perceptions remain unrealized in the poem, they will give the reader an inferior experience,—the same mixed quality of experience which he as a broker or merchant might himself have of the expected fact of death, a capricious woman, a lock of her

² Mr. I. A. Richards has argued, with admirable caution, that the æsthetic differs from the moral experience in the sole respect that the former has no necessary consequences in action. This aspect of the problem is psychological and beyond the scope of this paper. But on the pretty firm assumption that the personal motivation of philosophy is the same as that of poetry—the need of constructing a "portrait of reality"—one may say with some accuracy that poetry, as well as metaphysics, approaches an absolute. Thus, it is not within my purpose to discuss the psychology of æsthetic experience, but to propose a distinction between a poetic absolute and the defined absolute of systematic metaphysics.

hair. Indeed, such an imperfect poem might even increase the disturbance connoted by these. Persons in 1815 were not all aroused by Byron's *poetry*. They were stirred, as Mr. Kenneth Burke has said, in their own capacity for Byronism. Mr. Burke and I might not have that capacity; and Byron, as far as we are concerned, would cease to exist. But if we had it, he might do us moral injury by making us sad and disillusioned, or perhaps morally unconventional.

For the perfectly realized poem has no overflow of unrealized action. It does not say that men ought to be better or worse, or as they are; it has no ulterior motives. If it contains an originally ulterior motive, such as Dante's moral contempt for his enemies in Hell, it is absorbed and becomes implicit in form, rather than explicit and didactic. After reading "The Vision of Sir Launfal" one may forget the poem, but one is certain to give a dime, instead of the usual nickel, to the next beggar in Washington Square. Most of the poetry of Lowell or Tennyson is ulteriorly, or didactically, motivated. Mr. Ransom would not like it for just that reason. But the position of the good poet may not be so desperate as he seems to make it out.

For if the poet can accept his experience, which is his suffering, though it is often less intemperate than that, without the intermediacy of too much rationalized protest, without presenting the experience through a criticism of its frequent terror, it may be possible for him to come to absolute terms with it. A certain bias of intermediary criticism, which is not so much an interpretation of experience as a rejection, erects a wall between the poet and his material; the barrier will not let him get at it to deal with it cleanly. The poem will be an incomplete satisfaction because he could never quite face his material—because he is still confined to the merely ethical difficulties of his experience. He may write a brilliantly rational commentary on these difficulties, like Mr. Ransom's own poetry or Miss Marianne Moore's, or a deliberately irrational commentary like "The Waste Land". It may have passion, but it will be a little diffuse, and it will lack the intensity of "To the Accuser Who is God of this World" and of Mr. Yeats's "The Magi".

It will lack, in the word of Matthew Arnold and Mr. Edwin Muir, seriousness.

A serious poet is preoccupied with the writing of poems that fuse an intensely felt ordinary experience, an intense moral situation, into an intensely realized art. John Donne, a mystical poet too intelligent to be deluded into moral exhortation, into "the easy gospels bruited hither and yon", found the ultimate value of experience to be its ordered intensification; and this is the sole value and meaning of poetry. He found this meaning in absolute form. Absolute form is obviously the derivative of the poet-poem relation. This relation in metaphor is the formula:

$$A = ax^2 + bx + c.$$

a, b, c , are the constants—the expected fact of death, a capricious woman, a lock of her hair, respectively. x equals the unknown variable, the poet's personal equipment, determined by "heredity and environment" (the field of Mr. Van Wyck Brooks's genetic criticism); x , the personal equipment, as a variable, contributes to any set of constants a varying solution: no two poets would write the same poem out of the same constants as those above. A equals the value of the equation, its function: the absolute form. No two poets, again, could create the same absolute value, the same poem, out of the same subject-matter. For the difference between two poems is the difference between the results of the relation of x , the poet, to a, b, c , his subject-matter; the difference is not a property of subject-matter itself. Two poems, the one about death, the other about daffodils, may not evince a greater absolute difference than two poems about death.

Now to the metaphysician the absolute is a discursive principle to be reasoned out; and once found, it never changes. To a metaphysician there can be just one true absolute.³ All other

³ But not to the mathematical logicians of the present time; I mean Whitehead, Russell, and Moore. Their absolutes are not involved in a *Weltanschauung*; they are permanent types of relation, "enduring [patterns] of experience. See Moore's "The Conception of Intrinsic Value", in *Philosophical Studies* (1922); or Russell's discussion of the "reality" of conjunctions and prepositions, in his *Principles of Philosophy*.

absolutes, then, must be "wrong". For the variable x , the personality, is supposed not to affect the value A ; x is taken at a fixed value which is no value at all—subordination to the postulated "common logic". But the absolute of poetry is not an absolute of formal definition, like Spinoza's Substance. It is capable, by virtue of the properties in its origin, of infinite re-creations. It is a function of subject-matter in interaction with a personality. It is everywhere the same only in the sense that the need of the poet, under conditions peculiar to him, is the same in successive poems; or that the need of all poets is similar. Thus, Croce has argued, as a sentimental philosopher looking for absolute truth, that an identical absolute, Expression, appears throughout poetry; but in spite of an admirable dialectic it is only pedantry and rhetoric to carry the idea so far into abstraction. All that criticism can say positively is that the intensely felt personal need approaches an absolute, impersonal quality in the different terms of different poems.⁴

And of all the ends toward which poetry as an art strives, the most important is a signification of experience that becomes absolute, within the dimensions of the poem. This signification, this absolute, is creativeness, the unique quality of all good art. It may be neglected in a transitional period amid the diatribes of the schools about properties—rhyme, metre, "correctness" of diction. The criterion by which it may be detected varies, of course, with the preparation of critics; it varies with taste. But the material of poetry is forever much the same: the facts of a few permanent organic processes.⁵

⁴M. Paul Valéry, trying to convey by simile the quality of perfect poetry, compares it to a distant sailing-vessel—inanimate but articulate seemingly with an absolute life of its own.

⁵More explicitly, "the permanent facts of *unsignificated* processes." The discussion will proceed on the distinction between fact and process, the latter being the relating of two or more facts—the *knowing* of them. Thus, a quivering tree and blowing wind, isolated, are facts of no significance: only in causal relation do they constitute a process, and a relative one at that, in the philosophical sense, for children have been observed to think that trees *cause* wind, and savages relate these facts in a different sort of process altogether—sympathetic magic. As soon as the process is signified or described, it ceases to be process and becomes *language*. This distinction is implicit in the second sentence of the succeeding paragraph.

The material of poetry does not change, but poetry itself changes with modifications of language. Process and language, our way of knowing the process, must be identical in the end. Process is knowable only through our description of it; description is signification, or emotion before the facts of a process. Death, with all deference to the biologists, is not what it was thirty-three years ago. Then, the language, the process, the signification of the process—the emotion, was

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound or foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Now death is

But from its bracket how can the tongue tell
When systematic morn shall sometime flood
The pillow—how desperate is the light
That shall not rouse, how faint the crow's cavil!
As when, stunned in that antarctic blaze,
Your head, unrocking to a pulse, already
Hollowed by air, posts a white paraphrase
Among bruised roses on the papered wall.

Only the fact of organic decay, which is unknowable "in itself", has probably in some sense been the same from Alcman through Tennyson to Mr. Hart Crane.

The difference between the fact and the signification of the fact is the difference between chaos and creation, between an unrealized idea and an intensely articulated poem. Everyone feels the presence of the fact of death; only the poet is *aware* of it and his awareness is confined to the terms of his creation, the poem. Outside his poem he may be no wiser, no more deeply prophetic about future combinations of fact—"the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World"—than a merchant or a broker. Violation of this truism may produce a messiah—Hugo, Tennyson, Mr. H. G. Wells. But the idea is meaningless, there is no such thing as the idea, without the poem.⁶ Or again, the idea never precedes or makes the

⁶Shelley, in the *Defense of Poetry*, understood this principle when he said, concerning the relation of prophecy and poetry, that inferior poets make "poetry an attribute of prophecy" rather than subordinate prophecy to an

poem; all that precedes is the intensely felt need or direction of the poet; for the poem makes, creates the idea. The death-process is not an idea; it is a process. If this were not so, any person could be a poet; just as too many persons think they are poets because they have what they suppose to be poetic feelings about things. It appears to them to be sufficient merely to set down a "poetic idea"; but no idea is more poetic than another until it is created in poetry: there are no poetic ideas out of good poems. To paraphrase the created idea is to scatter it—is to reduce it to something like its originally unrealized condition in the ordinary moral state of the poet, and this state is simply an intensely felt personal need or direction. For, having read poems by *poets*, they think it is the writing of poetry unconsciously to diffuse, by rearrangement, the perceptions, the significations, of poets. They may be actually further from poetry than some one who has never read a poem, for their minds have been replaced by the minds of others, so that in the presence of an object they become aware of it with some one's else sensations. English poetry suffered reduction to this state in the verse of Alfred Austin. There is inevitably diffusion of interest beyond the margins of the poem. Some extra-æsthetic activity is necessary—charity, support of the State, perhaps penitence. Beyond "The Two Voices" there is church-going, the purpose of the "vision" in the lack of form; beyond "The City of Dreadful Night", a horror of life, "the insufferable inane."

To return to the algebraic metaphor. If the equation, the relation between the variable (the poet) and the constant (the subject-matter), is perfectly realized, or solved, then *A*, the absolute form, results. Otherwise, we have an inferior poem, an imperfectly solved equation: the result *A* fails to appear. And the reader is confronted with the problem the poet should have solved for him; he gets the inferior experience I have

attribute of poetry. These inferior writers may be praised in their own age, but as Shelley knew, they are merely servants of their own ephemeral *Zeitgeist*. Theirs may be a hierophantic *prediction of fact*, but not spiritual prophecy such as we acknowledge in Goethe.

already described. The inferior poem need not be written; for the inferior poet only states the problem without solving it, and this the reader is capable of doing for himself. Applied to Tennyson, who too often turned the problem off into exhortation and obscured its realities, this distinction indicates that he did not know his own mind, or did not care to know it.

The re-statement of these familiar principles is made in their failure to appear, widely and explicitly, in contemporary criticism. Mr. Ransom's note, so far as it goes, is extremely valuable. But it stops with a description of changing attitudes, and these refer to changing moral states, out of which the poetry of an age takes its mood, its outlook. No particular philosophical outlook, monism, dualism, pluralism, is exclusively important for poetry; though some outlook is both inevitable and desirable. A philosophical monist has no greater claim to absolutism in poetry than a philosophical dualist. It is impossible to say, with any precision, what Shakespeare was; Blake was a monist; Racine, a dualist. It all depends on the poet's sheer poetic ability: all great poets are absolutists. There is nothing beyond their poetry.

The absolutism inheres between the poet and his poetry, between the reader and the poetry, not between them and the world. This immediately explains the necessity for art. For if the irresistible need of the mind for absolute experience could be adequately satisfied in ordinary, cursory experience, this latter experience classified into moral states and defined intellectually in an absolute metaphysics would be sufficient. It was Hegel who in this way convinced himself that he foresaw the decay of art and the supremacy of philosophy. It is the perennial hope of sentimentalists that a world absolute is possible.

The late T. E. Hulme, prophet of his generation, understood its impossibility in an importantly significant way. He liked Mr. G. E. Moore's neo-realism because that attitude, next to the mathematical sciences, offered a rather pure system of absolutes: the system seemed to him to be free from "satisfactions" of emotion rationalized into ontological truth. But Hulme, lacking the feeling for literature, misunderstood the

aims of poetry. He would have rejected the Hegelian faith in metaphysics without having a word to say for poetry. Although he scorned the sentimental pretensions of philosophers and cosmic poets, he was nevertheless looking for an arbitrarily defined absolute; he apparently did not understand the created absolute of poetry. He believed in perception as the foundation of poetry; his own few verses show that he believed it also to be its end—if poetry should be possible at all. For as a Platonist in æsthetics he had but little respect for the subject-matter of art. He did not understand that it is the absolute intensification of perception beyond its moral situation which is the unique quality of poetry: the intensification of perception into “something rich and strange” wholly superior to subject-matter in the ordinary state. Hulme believed that literature, especially since the Renaissance, is mere subject-matter, uncontrolled or subservient to the megalomania of the Romantic spirit; he contemned it. Had he not, he would have left a record of the most important mind in this generation.

For Hulme actually wrote, in the notes for his *Critique of Satisfaction*, our soundest repudiation of the nineteenth-century quest of an absolute solution of the world, of a world it pretended to know something about. Disgusted with Romantic metaphysics, with its literary vagaries also, he became a scholastic whose need for absolutes was presumably satisfied in a study of the interrelations among the remembered, static intuitions of thought—a philosophy of considerable dignity and sterility. And metaphysically, in his denial of metaphysics, he exceeded classical dualism; he was a pluralist, without the romantic pragmatism of James. He defined the mood, the outlook, of this age.

This mood is back of the “poetic discontent” for which Mr. Ransom expends some very interesting regret. Most contemporary poets, less fortunate or less willing to compromise than Mr. Frost and Mr. Blunden, have something like Hulme’s fear of any subject-matter whatever. They suspect it; poets in the last century put it to bad uses; it might be better if we could do without it altogether—as Miss Gertrude Stein almost does. So it is significant that Hulme thought art ought to be

geometrical form—an absolute of definition, like Spinoza's, prior to all experience, completely empty of matter out of the imperfect world. He failed to recognize the absolute of the poet in the poem: the absolute of Marvell and his reader in "To His Coy Mistress": the spiritual life of seventeenth-century France elevated to an absolute quality in the tragedies of Racine.

Hulme's faulty evaluation of the motive of literature has not, so far as I know, been explicitly corrected. Mr. Eliot has implied a good deal of valuable correction in several of his essays, notably "Tradition and the Individual Talent". M. Valéry, writing of the post-war predicament in France, has discussed the possibility of a new literature out of the world of modern science. But criticism has been chiefly concerned with a repudiation of the moral values of the preceding age as they persist in current literature. No school of critics has developed, by attending exclusively to the properties of poetry as a fine art, an elaborate æsthetic attitude. No one apparently has been so thoroughly disciplined in that attitude that it has become a constantly implicit criterion, enabling him to isolate explicitly the absolute quality of particular poets and to reject a poetry from which the quality is missing.

The test of an absolute creation must be applied *a posteriori*: it must be variously derived and as variously phrased. One may say that Mr. Yeats's poems, "Upon a Dying Lady", survive the test, in any formulation, because, although they are elegiac and thus about a familiar organic process, he has perceived the process in a freshly direct way and has invented a very intense new language about it. He has presented a newly-created emotion never before felt by anyone and never to be felt creatively by anyone else; he has contributed an absolute signification to an old and relative fact. It is absolute because it is unique and contains no point of relation to any other signification of that fact. The uncritical person may think he has felt that way about death. But it is not recognition, as Hulme and the Platonists would insist, that makes him enjoy the poems—although a minimum of common feeling *permits* him to approach the poems at all; it is participation in an absolute experience

he could not arrange for himself. If his feeling merely coincided with Mr. Yeats's, there would be verse only, not poetry: there would be simply an unrealized idea shared vaguely by him and Mr. Yeats.

In the course of this essay the writer has spoken of poetry as the fusion of "an intensely felt ordinary experience, an intense moral situation, into an intensely realized art." He is definitely conscious of indebtedness to the tendency of ideas in the *Metaphysics* and the *Poetics* of Aristotle.

POSTSCRIPT.—An explicit rendition of the indebtedness would begin with a distinction. Romantic German æsthetics, through Hegel, collapses as the fallacy of abstraction; it identified poetry with the absolute, but in the conception of the absolute as *substance* (noumenon), poetry became unthinkable abstract, substance being absolute only in abstraction and vanishing utterly in concrete experience. On the other hand, the Aristotelian view of poetry as a *quality* of experience does not commit the poet to an absolute content, but simply to a recurring pattern of perception. This pattern, in the phrase of Whitehead, is the "prehensive unity" of an event, at once absolute and concrete. (Cf. footnote 3, *supra*.)

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WHAT IS LITERATURE?

No too formidable question! thinks the after-dinner reader, as his eye falls upon the title of this paper. We all seem to know what Literature is. We have been reading it all our lives. All our lives! And we know what we mean when we use that phrase, even though this commonest of words and most persistent of experiences—life—we haven't, or our sages haven't, quite succeeded as yet in defining. Etymologically, of course, everybody knows that Literature is simply a writing (*littera*, a letter; in the plural, letters or learning). It embraces in its largest meaning all written and printed compositions; more restrictedly, those which promote thought or knowledge; and still more restrictedly, those which deal with a content of universal value in a manner of exceptional beauty or power—those compositions, in short, which possess artistic excellence.

Yet somehow, in spite of these apparently accurate narrowings of the field of true Literature, there still remains an uneasy sense of inaccuracy. Did the quintessence of Literature, did the thing-in-itself, exist before the invention of the arts of writing and of printing? What of the oral tradition behind the literal? And what of the strange, silent forces behind the vocal? If, by some extraordinary cataclysm, all the books and writings in the world were suddenly to be destroyed, would Literature still contrive to maintain its past and address its future? Does Literature, indeed, consist actually of books and writings at all? Are these things veritably it itself, or rather its normal tools, its convenient and habitual but not indispensable means of communication? Would it not be as reasonable to declare that Music is the sum-total of all the tonal instruments in the world, or that in a certain determinable number of canvases and statues the arts of Painting and Sculpture are comprised, as to accept as final the facile text-book definition which identifies Literature with its own mere media? It is hard to remember, and harder still to realize, that Literature is nothing if it is not an art; that Art is one; and that its oneness is of ideal, of spiritual, birth and being. It sees spirit, interprets spirit, appeals to

spirit, evokes response from spirit. Does a poem consist of certain black marks imposed by pen or press upon a page of white paper? Does the picture-buyer measure his gain by the yardstick? The story of Turner and his rich but vulgar patron tells us better. "A heavy price, Mr. Turner, for a little paint!" "Ah, I beg your pardon, I didn't understand that it was paint you were wanting. You may have that tube over there for sixpence."

Unfortunately, we are so accommodatively casual in our daily language that we do not sufficiently discourage the popular, mechanic way of talking and thinking about Literature. Perhaps the matter has never been better put than by that fine-grained poet and critic, Sidney Lanier. When he was lecturing on Shakespeare at Johns Hopkins during the winter of 1879-80, he distinguished between two classes of humanity as regards their respective attitudes toward Literature. In the second scene of the second act of the tragedy which bears his name, Hamlet, preoccupied with a book (perhaps Juvenal's tenth *Satire*), enters a room of state and is questioned thus by that would-be detective, Polonius: "What do you read, my lord?" To this query Hamlet replies with the famous iteration: "Words, words, words." "We have here," remarks Sidney Lanier, "the lowest possible ideal of Literature. . . . But permit me now to place in the sharpest contrast at once before your eyes and minds an ideal of Literature which is quite at the other extreme of dignity." And he goes on to tell how the Apostle John, when he was "casting about within his beautiful soul" for some phrase which might most happily suggest the inscrutable mystery of the Divine, opens his gospel with this mystical affirmation: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." On the one hand, "Words, words, words." On the other, "the Word was God." "Here," says Lanier, "if we read between the lines, we have the highest ideal of Literature." And Lanier spoke true, for *Logos*, as Cardinal Newman wrote, stands for both *reason* and for *speech*; "which are in a true sense one, speech being the double, the instrument, the channel, of the intellect's speculations and emotions." There, then, are the two views, the one regarding Lit-

erature as a blind tangle and jungle of words, the point of view of many millions who evade or ignore it; the other representing the thought of those who welcome it gratefully as an abiding witness to the existence of a God of Beauty and of a Gospel of Art.

If, therefore, there is any hope of defining the term Literature even measurably well, it seems necessary to push the question back at least two removes. We must first arrive at some answer to the question: "What is Art?" And again, as a necessary condition to that discussion (since Art in all its aspects is but a reflection of that strange experience which we call Human Life), we must begin precisely at that really formidable and unanswerable query: "What, now, is Life?"

What is Life? This question of questions is indeed, by common consent, unanswerable, yet the curious mind of man has never been willing, on that account, to give up the riddle. The effort at definition here must vary in selective emphasis with the characteristic interest of the definer. One may look upon Life as constituting so much laboratory material for scientific examination; or, again, as comprising a series of experiences the prime significance of which is moral or religious; or, still again, as presenting a vast physical organization out of which one may, if he can, extract the means of promoting his personal comfort or luxury. One may regard Life from the philosophic angle, or the poetic, or the industrial, or the biological, or the civic, or the ecclesiastical. Widely varying efforts at its definition have been made by definers of widely varying temperament and programme. Says the philosophic scientist, Herbert Spencer:

Life is the constant effort of an organism to adjust itself to its environment.

Clear and admirable as this saying is, it is obviously less a definition than a statement of function. Spencer essays a more complete if academic definition in the following:

Life is the definite combination of heterogeneous changes, both simultaneous and successive, in correspondence with external co-existences and sequences.

And George Henry Lewes similarly asserts that

Life is a series of definite and suggestive changes, of both structure and composition, which take place within an individual without destroying its identity.

It is significant that the word *changes* appears in both of these definitions. Sir Oliver Lodge, for his part, considers Life "the vivifying principle which animates matter." This, I fear, does not take us far. Great physicist as Sir Oliver is, almost any college freshman could tell him that this definition violates one of the fundamental rules of the art of defining: that the word which it is sought to define should not reappear in the course of the definition. *Vivifying* and *animates* here are question-begging words, and what the statement really amounts to is that Life is the life-giving principle which gives life to matter. Some of the dictionary definitions, however, are hardly more useful: the state of being alive; the condition or time between birth and death; the vital principle; animated existence; living state. Professional scientists are quick to admit the immense difficulty of describing or characterizing Life. As Peter Cook has put the matter in a review of Professor Max Verworn's *General Physiology of Life*:

We know that Life is not a force in any ordinary sense of the term. It cannot be weighed or measured in foot-pounds. It is not an energy, exerts no pressure, cannot be converted into anything else, has no dimensions and no mass. It is not a chemical affinity. It is mere illusion to regard it as ever so tenuous an emanation of matter. It adds no new quality to any atom or molecule. It cannot abrogate, change, or oppose any chemical or physical law. Yet it guides and directs both chemical and physical forces, exhibits purpose and will and in its higher spheres also sensation and consciousness. It is a point-blank contradiction and very nearly a philosophical impossibility in scientific systems. What is it?

What is it? Are more useful answers forthcoming from the literary artists? "Human life," says Sudermann's Doctor Kahlenberg in *The Joy of Living*, "is simply a process of molecular adjustment complicated by moral idiosyncrasies." "Life,"

thinks Mrs. Allanby in Oscar Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance*, "is simply a *mauvais quart d'heure* made up of exquisite moments." "Droll thing Life is," comes Conrad's word from *Heart of Darkness*, "that mysterious arrangement of merciless logic for a futile purpose. The most you can hope from it is some knowledge of yourself—that comes too late—a crop of unextinguishable regrets." And Stevenson:

Although we have some experience of living, there is not a man on earth who has flown so high into abstraction as to have any practical guess at the meaning of the word life.

And he goes on to poke fun at the philosophic conclusion that Life is merely "a Permanent Possibility of Sensation." All in all, I am inclined to think that Henry James's dryly whimsical remark made to a young lady bent on securing *his* definition can hardly be bettered: "Life is the predicament that precedes death."

The reader will observe, however, that both scientists and artists (who are beginning now to salute each other as fellow-workers of the Imagination) emphasize the importance of the element of change, or growth, or development, in Life. The artist, who is by his very nature and function attracted toward mysticism, tends to look upon the phenomena of life rather less from the point of view of the systematic synthesizer, and rather more from the point of view of the symbolist, the mystic. To him Life is indeed a predicament. It presents to his vision a *mélange*, a welter, of fascinating symbols which by no means carry their meanings upon the surface, but which seem to possess secret and possibly soluble qualities that hint at the eternal significance behind them. As Life appears to us in our daily experience it is, declares Bernard Shaw, "an unintelligible chaos of happenings. . . . Life as it occurs is senseless." All thoughtful people have known moments when the Platonic suggestion in the *Theaetetus* that Life may be a dream-state has seemed acceptable enough, but the frequency with which it is employed by literary artists amounts almost to unanimity. Whether realist or romanticist, they seem to agree—indeed often to insist—either that life is in truth a dream or that, at any rate, it is extraordi-

narily like a dream. The following passages may serve to illustrate and support this suggestion. In *Adonais* Shelley speaks of Keats as having "awakened from the dream of life," in his *Hymns to Intellectual Beauty* he writes of "Life's unquiet dream," which becomes "Life's envenomed dream" in *The Revolt of Islam*, and his *Sensitive Plant* closes on the same note. In *Saul Browning's* David wonders when Saul shall awake

From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new life,—a new harmony yet
To be run, and continued and ended—who knows?—or endure!
The man taught enough by life's dream, of the rest to make sure.

And of Browning himself Swinburne declares that

He held no dream worth waking; so he said,
He who stands now on death's triumphal steep,
Awakened out of life wherein we sleep
And dream of what he knows and sees, being dead.

"Life," say Beaumont and Fletcher, "is but a word, a shadow, a melting dream." And Sir Thomas Browne finds the world "but a dream and mock-show, and we all therein but pantaloons and antics, to my severer contemplations." Tennyson's *Ancient Sage* counsels us to

. . . be wise in this dream-world of ours,
Nor take thy dial for thy deity,
But make the passing shadow serve thy will.

In *Nostromo* Conrad makes one of his characters remark: "All this is life, must be life, since it is so much like a dream." And Stevenson concludes the passage quoted in part above:

All literature, from Job and Omar Khayyam to Thomas Carlyle and Walt Whitman, is but an attempt to look upon the human state with such largeness of view as shall enable us to rise from the consideration of living to the Definition of Life. And our sages give us about the best satisfaction in their power when they say that it is a vapour, or a show, or made out of the same stuff with dreams.

In the literature of France we find many similar testimonies, as in Leconte de Lisle and De Musset. Victor Hugo tells us that

The best as the worst are futile here:
We wake at the selfsame point of the dream,—
All is here begun, and finished elsewhere.

Paul Verlaine admonishes us:

The one thing needful on earth, it
Is not to be whimpering.
Is Life after all a thing
Real enough to be worth it?

And the late Anatole France has deftly touched the matter in *Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard*, where he recounts a conversation between the old scholar and the little book agent who sought to sell him a crude *Key of Dreams*.

—Voici la *Clef des songes*, avec l'explication de tous les rêves qu'on peut faire: rêve d'or, rêve de voleur, rêve de mort, rêve qu'on tombe du haut d'une tour. . . . C'est complet!

J'avais saisi les pincettes, et c'est en les agitant avec vivacité que je répondis à mon visiteur commercial:

—Oui, mon ami, mais ces songes et mille autres encore, joyeux et tragiques, se résument en un seul: le songe de la vie; et votre petit livre jaune me donnera-t-il la clef de celui-là?

Oui, monsieur, me répondit l'homonculus. Le livre est complet et pas cher: un franc vingt-cinq centimes, monsieur.

Calderon was so much impressed by the dream-likeness of Life that he created his fine play called simply *Life is a Dream*. Sophocles felt that "we live and move, mere imitations of dreams;" and so Æschylus: "Creatures that fade in a day, strengthless and dream-like." "Man," chants the Psalmist, "is like a thing of nought, his time passeth away like a shadow."

German and Russian writers, too, seem to find this thought unescapable. "That the life of man is but a dream," broods Goethe in *Sorrows of Werther*, "many a man has heretofore surmised, and I, too, am everywhere pursued by this same feeling."

To return to our own literature, perhaps the noblest expressions of the idea are to be found in Shakespeare and in Carlyle. Prospero, in words of magnificent eloquence, reveals the enchantment of life as he speaks of the dissolution of

The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,

and he goes on to pronounce the considered conclusion:

. . . . We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

And in *Sartor Resartus* Carlyle, after propounding the endless riddle: "Who am I; what is this Me?" answers himself:

Sure enough, I am; and lately was not: but Whence? How? Whereto? The answer lies around, written in all colours and motions, uttered in all tones of jubilee and wail, in thousand-figured, thousand-voiced, harmonious Nature: but where is the cunning eye and ear to whom that God-written Apocalypse will yield articulate meaning? We sit as in a boundless Phantasmagoria and Dream-grotto; boundless, for the faintest star, the remotest century, lies not even nearer the verge thereof: sounds and many-coloured visions flit round our sense; but Him, the Unslumbering, whose work both Dream and Dreamer are, we see not; except in rare, half-waking moments, suspect not. Creation, says one, lies before us, like a glorious Rainbow; but the Sun that made it lies behind us, hidden from us. Then, in that strange Dream how we clutch at shadows as if they were substances; and sleep deepest while fancying ourselves most awake! Which of your Philosophical Systems is other than a dream-theorem; a net quotient, confidently given out, where divisor and dividend are both unknown? What are all your national Wars, with their Moscow Retreats, and sanguinary, hate-filled Revolutions, but the Somnambulism of uneasy Sleepers? This Dreaming, this Somnambulism, is what we on Earth call Life; wherein the most indeed undoubtingly wander, as if they knew right hand from left; yet they only are wise who know that they know nothing.

Thus our cloud of witnesses! But why are these sensitive artist-spirits disposed so to regard Life? The characteristics of the dream experience seem to be incompleteness, imperfection, mystery, symbolization; and as the artist becomes more and more aware of Life it, too, challenges him with a series of strangely miscellaneous feelings and happenings, suggesting now one philosophy, now another. It, too, is broken into half-lights, wandering shadows, vague hopes, illusions and disillusion,

ambitions and submissions, sudden radiances of joy and griefs so bitter as to make death seem welcome. "There is no such thing in human life," declares William De Morgan, "as a flawless event." Although Life appears to be full of meanings, its meanings are not borne upon the surface. It is quite true, as Longfellow warns us, that Life is not an empty dream, but the emphasis belongs rather to the adjective, for Life is indeed a dream in that it is everywhere provisional, symbolic, requiring interpretation. What Joseph in the Bible story did for Pharaoh the artist seeks to do for humanity. For Art is the interpretation of the Dream of Life, and with its instinct humanity is inalienably endowed. Art tries to interpret life through the most felicitous symbols it can employ—through musical tones, through tints and pigments, through chiselled stone and faith-wrought tower, through words and silences. Like our other great words—Life and Death and Eternity and Soul and Love—Art can never be adequately defined. And the essence of Poetry, the highest and noblest of the arts, is the most difficult of all to set forth in a sentence, since it is the most Protean. The statements are as various as the creators and the critics, and this doubtless is well, for particularity and insistent dicta are foreign to the spirit of Literature. Literature is large and catholic, in its essence a mystery. It is an unquenchable spiritual impulse and adventure suggested (for it cannot be completely realized) in words whose beauty both empowers and preserves them. "You cannot escape Literature," said Sidney Lanier, "for how can you think yourself out of thought? How can you run away from your own feet?"

Literature, then, becomes the catholic attempt at the concentrated utterance of cosmic thoughts and feelings couched in language of strange though changing loveliness. If it were not for our imperfection, we earthlings would perhaps feel less rather than more sensitively the appeal of Art, the human expression of which cannot be other than a compromise between the heaven reached for and the tentative grasped. And this very inadequacy of language to capture and confine those remoter values of thought and feeling that remain inexpress-

ible must always baffle even the freest artist and increase the difficulty of his undertaking. Words, as Tennyson laments,

Words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the soul within.

So Shelley as critic affirms that "the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet," while Shelley as poet cries

. . . . Woe is me!
The wingèd words on which my soul would pierce
Into the heights of love's rare universe
Are chains of lead around its flight of fire.

Wingèd words! Chains of lead! And this cry from Shelley, who was much less hampered than are most poets by the clogs and fardels of expression.

Yet Shelley's own conquests bear witness that the artist can capture for utterance something from the eternity that surrounds us, can redeem something from earthly oblivion, although his task is far more delicate than the tools with which he must perform it, and although he is constantly haunted by the sense of his limitations. Art requires immense resolve, extraordinary energy, tireless toil. Only the tremendousness of genius carries it through.

Art, then, seems to be the imaginative interpretation of Life through felicitous symbols wrought by a fine-fibred, great-souled personality. Felicitous in point of fitness, fortunateness, relentless compulsion. It may be worth while to remind ourselves again that the great arts are differentiable not in respect of intention, but only in respect of the peculiar means or symbols they employ. Music uses tone-symbols; Painting, colour-symbols; Sculpture and Architecture, form-symbols; and Literature, language-symbols. Actually recorded Literature, then, may be defined as a continuous imaginative commentary upon Life framed in language-symbols. It is the marginal gloss on Life's epic movement; the Greek chorus of Life's tragic quarrel with enfolding dooms and discords that exalt even while they destroy.

If it is to endure, a work of Literature must have wide human appeal in tone and intention, must be catholic, comprehensive.

On the other hand, it must be deeply personal, too, revealing through style the unique idiosyncrasies of its author, whether he be a scholar, like Bacon; or a vagrant, like Poe; or a compound of both, like Borrow. It must be fundamentally sane and sincere; its melancholy (an inalienable endowment of Art and artists) must not lapse into pessimism, nor its joy degrade itself into mere clever flippancy; it must, in a word, possess root-serenity. It must think, it must feel, it must imagine, and it must charm. It must be at once brave and beautiful, strenuous and serene, unique and universal. Universality, style, root-serenity—in this trinity men have long felt that Literature consists.

Difficult as it may be to say anything either novel or freshly useful touching the several members of this trinity, yet the rapid review that follows of these tests and traits of greatness and permanence in Literature is undertaken in the hope that it may prove to be something more than a mere pious repetition of conclusions occurring in the *loci critici* between Aristotle and Arnold.

By universality is meant simply that the work in question must not be evolved from a provincial point of view (although, as George Moore cryptically remarks, "Art must be parochial in the beginning to become cosmopolitan in the end"), but must have appeal for many ages and peoples, must have no party but mankind. "One hundred thousand village souls," says Boyesen, "do not make a city." It is quite possible to have the universal spirit without travel, or to travel and yet remain provincial. The artist, like other men, cannot be physically ubiquitous. Paradoxically enough, one can best be universal by living intensely in some specific environment, by collaborating with the soil-values and folk-values of one's place and time, for the world is made up of its own miniatures, and the man who interprets in a universal spirit the life about him interprets all life. Mankind, as Goethe has it, is always advancing, but humanity remains the same. One of the greatest living authors has told me that he has never been much of a traveller, and expresses the belief that those who do travel should seek national quintessences in the great cities of the world. "Cities," Emerson felt, "give us collision." But his remarks about

travel for travel's sake in his essay on *Culture* are none too enthusiastic. Certainly, Shakespeare travelled relatively little, yet he remains our most universal poet, of enormous and apparently cumulative influence on human life at large. The Germans, indeed, seem to regard his birth in England as something of an accident, insist that they discovered him as a thinker, and have long since adopted him into their race with characteristic German thoroughness, although the attempt of a German professor during the Great War to adopt Michael Angelo also met with slighter success. Ben Jonson, on the other hand, who moved about a good deal, is decidedly less universal. But this relation reverses itself in the opposition between the Italianate Browning and the insular (though nobly insular) Tennyson. The truth is that Art cares little for local and provincial programmes, for geographical and political boundaries as such. It has its own kingdom, timeless and placeless; its own gospel; and, it may be added, its own morality. Shakespeare, as Landor rightly and reverently said, is not our poet, but the world's; for, as Hazlitt saw it, "the striking peculiarity of his mind was its generic quality." Its power of imaginative projection seems to have been almost unlimited. Shakespeare sought to get past the barriers of his own Elizabethan being into actual brotherhood with Being itself. How tolerant he was, and how curious; how passionately human and yet how eternal-thoughted!

So it was with Homer, and so with Sophocles, so with Dante and the other giants, who are read to-day because they have something of large value to communicate about the persistent problems of the life-experience that we moderns share with their first hearers and readers. Our classic ancestors in Art had no prevision of the political organisms and international problems that so concern our day, yet the modernity of these men is amazing; the freshness of their counsel, the charm of their comradeship, endure and endure. Although their very dust has long since disappeared through the gates of dusty death, their thoughts remain our cherished heritage, and their spirits we have canonized among the saints of Art.

There is, however, another aspect of universality that requires some emphasis. The value of a really great work of art is

inexhaustible for the race and for the individual alike. It must have cumulative appeal both to the same individual and to the race itself, according to the stages of personal as of racial growth. A student once informed the writer that he preferred not to take a certain course in Shakespearean Tragedy if *Hamlet* were to be studied because he had already 'done' *Hamlet*, a remark which may be contrasted with one made by the late Horace H. Furness: "I have been studying *Hamlet* for forty years, and I think I am beginning to understand it." Perhaps we mistake in regarding certain poems—*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, for example—as peculiarly adapted to high school curricula, as having a place in our educational scheme where they, too, can be 'done'. Children do, of course, eagerly respond to the *Ancient Mariner*. The son of a professional friend of mine in Chicago could always end a quarrel with his sisters and put them to utter rout by shouting at the top of his voice:

The very deep did rot! O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

Neither he nor the little girls knew exactly what those dreadful words might mean, but they well knew that they were dreadful words; and Coleridge, no doubt, would have been delighted at their use as a menacing incantation. Child or man—who can exhaust the meanings of that amazing adventure into divers deeps? Horizons are, of course, but they are not to be charted and determined. And, similarly, we need not hesitate to place some of the supreme masterpieces in the hands of boys and girls whose tastes and aptitudes show response. There are no few children who could happily explore Butcher and Lang's translation of the *Odyssey*, and who, as Lamb believed, could be safely trusted, when turned into the pasture of a home library, to make their own selections. They will feed on the food there that is convenient for them, and, like Pompilia, "will not take corruption." I am not sure that that educator was wholly wrong who asked why we should be so careful about adapting the classics to children when the children are already adapted to the classics.

But uncommunicated universality merely marks time. The subtlest nuances and rhythms of style are needed to give it power and continuity. And style has meant a thousand things to a thousand students of it, because it is, as has already been suggested, so deeply personal a quality. Grammar teaches us the difference between right and wrong in the use of language; Rhetoric, the difference between the effective and the ineffective; but pure Style is much less a logical language-process than a psychological endowment. Walter Pater and Havelock Ellis both distinguish between the intellectual, the formative quality, in Style—its mind, in short—and the spiritual element that gives it its peculiar colour, its aroma, its influence. Says Walter Pater:

As a quality of style, soul is a fact, in certain writers—the way they have of absorbing language, of attracting it into the peculiar spirit they are of, with a subtlety which makes the actual result seem like some inexplicable inspiration. By mind, the literary artist reaches us, through static and objective indications of design in his work, legible to all. By soul, he reaches us . . . through vagrant sympathy and a kind of immediate contact.

And Ellis, in that now indispensable work, *The Dance of Life*, bids us remember that

Style is not a sheet of glass in which the only thing that matters is the absence of flaws. It is the miraculous transubstantiation of a spiritual body, given to us in the only form in which we may receive and absorb that body, and unless its clarity is balanced by its beauty it is not adequate to sustain that most high function.

And again:

It is . . . supremely well defined as "grace seasoned with salt." Beyond all that can be achieved by knowledge and effort, there must be the spontaneous grace that springs up like a fountain from the depth of a beautifully harmonious nature, and there must be also . . . the salt quality which gives savour and point and antiseptic virtue.

Both artists and critics are more and more proving and approving this view. Indeed, must not all the ingredients of great

art finally be disclosed as personal ingredients? De Maupassant speaks of the novelist as seeking to communicate to us his personal vision of the world; and Henry James:

A novel is in its broadest definition a personal, a direct impression of life: that, to begin with, constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression.

Style, concludes Cardinal Newman, "is a thinking out into language." It is, says Schopenhauer, "the physiognomy of the mind, and a safer index to character than the face."

Accordingly, although we must continue to disengage the negative faults of body and mind in Style, the only moulder of the soul of Style is the soul itself. "Out of the abundance of the heart." "As a man thinketh in his heart." "What you are speaks so loud I cannot hear what you say." Style thus becomes a necessary part of content. Without personal sincerity there can hardly be artistic sincerity. Without personal emotion—actual, recollected, or imaginatively vicarious—it is idle to hope for a passionate irradiation of style. Shakespeare was no cautious selector of words, nor a too fastidious placer or polisher of them. He had an instantaneous sensitiveness to their beauty, their kinships, their colours, their lights and shades—that is, to their personalities, and he felt that they were to be coaxed, chosen and communed with very much as he dealt with his fellow-beings. Like Chaucer and Fielding and Synge, Shakespeare 'spoke with the vulgar and thought with the wise.' He loved the vernacular, and used warm straightforward words whose pulse and power the people could feel, whether or not they understood the wisdom behind. In short, he habitually used common words to say uncommon things, a Schopenhauerean counsel of first-rate value.

At its best, there is something magical about this matter of style, but is not that because there is something unplumbable about personality? Adorned or naked, romantic or austere, whether it be the organ-like sonority of Milton, the dulcet piano lyrics of Tennyson, the grave harpings of Gray, or even the nervous banjo-strummings of Kipling, if only it be sincere in its inspiration and simple in its humanity, it will infallibly win the

hearts of the many or the few who need it and await it. "The great thing," said Thackeray, "is to write no sentence without a meaning to it. That is what Style really means." With all the immense critical apparatus of the centuries, can we explain poetry much more understandingly than the little lad who thought that "a poem is something that isn't true, but you all wish that it were true, and that is put in nice, jolly words." And it is precisely nice, jolly words, when they are inevitably nice and jolly, that make style, for they will not be jolly without their appropriate rhythm, nor nice without fulfilling their function as the indispensable parts of a conceived and considered pattern. Style is that sensitive medium by which great thoughts and feelings are registered and radiated. It is uttered harmony.

By Root-Serenity I mean what Professor Dowden meant when he wrote of Shakespeare's "culture of self-control", or Bernard Shaw has in mind in speaking of the same master's "divine levity . . . an inexhaustible joy that derided sorrow . . . an exultation in what breaks the hearts of common men." One means indeed simply that although the artist must suffer, and suffer deeply, both actually and vicariously, as Shakespeare must have suffered before he could write his subtler sonnets and his four iron tragedies, and Dante before he could walk in spirit through his *Inferno*, and Michael Angelo before he began "The Last Judgment"—yet in spite of this great artistic melancholy, the creator of true art must not lose his grip upon himself. If he goes down into hell, it must not be a hell that has power over him, to undo him. I have referred above to the melancholy of Art and artists, a principle which has strongly persisted in our own literature from the time of the Saxon sages to our own day. Its roots, perhaps, are three: recognition of the incompleteness of human life; inability to express a thought or truth with the sheer first power of that thought or truth; and failure to win more than a very slight share in the responsive sympathy of men and women. The poet is baffled at every turn by these "Thus far's", even though he may fight the better for them. But though he walks into shadow, he does so in order that he may walk through it, may see it what it is.

"If way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst." It is not possible for a great artist to escape acute awareness of the element of tragedy in life, for this is life's most insoluble riddle, most severe inspiration, the very center of its storm and stress. "Tragedy at its best," writes John Masefield, "is a vision of the heart of life." Yet it is a serious mistake to suppose that Shakespeare—even though he more than once seems himself to have been tottering on the edge of dark abysses during his middle period—was on that account at any time a cynical and embittered man. To the artist—sensitive above other men—the values of the Dark are as indispensable to his insight and interpretative power as are those of the Light. He can spare nothing.

It is plain, of course, that Shakespeare moved through those periods suggested for us in Dowden's illuminating captions: In the Workshop, Out in the World, In the Depths, On the Heights. These four periods could be reduced to three by grouping the first two together, as the Thesis period, to use Hegel's word, and following it by the periods of Antithesis and Synthesis. It has been wisely said that a man's first word is *Yes*; his second, *No*; his third, *Yes* again. The first *Yes* would seem to represent the ready, spontaneous, docile, receptive attitude of Youth and Adolescence. The *No*, on the other hand, is, in the best sense, sceptical. It is not that I deny, but that I must try and test for myself all these values which have been handed down to me by heritage and tradition. This second period is often involved in great gloom and suffering, and from it some unfortunate artists have never emerged—witness the case of Poe. But the supremely great artist has an anticipative foresight which enables him to find his way through the thick night and deep melancholy of that time. Shakespeare had his clue, which brought him out triumphantly into the third period, when he again said *Yes*—the *Yes* of a wise, kind, serene maturity, the *Yes* of the philosophic mind. Root-Serenity is, then, self-control actually even if not apparently continuous. It enables an artist to project himself into a favourable future in the face of an unfavourable present and, precisely because it is at once a shield and a sword, it encourages him to challenge destiny in

the heroic spirit of a Childe Roland. The tragedies of Shakespeare deal, as the late Professor Raleigh has said,

with greater things than man; with powers and passions, elemental forces, and dark abysses of suffering. . . . Because he is a poet, and has a true imagination, Shakespeare knows how precarious is man's tenure of the soil, how deceitful are his quiet orderly habits and his prosaic speech. At any moment, by the operation of chance or fate, these things may be blown up, and the world be given over once more to the forces that struggled in Chaos.

During Shakespeare's first *Yes* period, he produced such plays as *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—plays filled with the somewhat boisterous joy in living of an exuberant young man. In this same period he moves, however, toward more sensitive work in *Much Ado*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*. Indeed, it seems to me that each one of the three periods reproduces in miniature the movement of the whole. His *No* period was initiated with the questioning, ironical spirit of *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*. Besides the dark central tragedies, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Timon of Athens* and *Coriolanus* belong also here, as do the deeper-toned sonnets. The plays of the final *Yes*—*Cymbeline*, *The Tempest* and *A Winter's Tale*—are really amplifications of that silver lining or hint of redemption which we find in each instance attaching itself to even the most profoundly tragic utterances of the second period. *The Tempest*, for example, implicitly expands and justifies those hints and gleams of final good which suggest themselves in Macbeth's recognition of the justice of his fate, Lear's lamentation for Cordelia, and Hamlet's last words—"The rest is silence." Though Shakespeare has passed through intense spiritual suffering, he has been throughout the master, not only of other men's minds, but also of his own. He has been, in the worst moments of his interior loneliness and arduous approach toward an ideal human philosophy, *at heart serene*.

Shall we ever be able to persuade ourselves to use the term Art of Art alone? An artist, we know, is no mere artisan, expert practical reproducer or imitator; nor even an artificer, expert

deviser or inventor. The artisan aims at accuracy; the artificer has real talent; but the artist alone has the ideal aim and the tireless energy of genius, alone imaginatively interprets. And just as the terms artificer and artist are to be critically distinguished, so are fact truth and *vraie vérité*, formal beauty and pure beauty, conventional morality and essential morality. Perhaps the means may be found here of a reasonable solution of that "still vexed" problem: the relation of art to morality. Can they ever be reconciled? Can they consciously work together? But into the discussion of this complex subject, cognate and challenging as it is, the present paper cannot enter.

What is provable about things? asks Science, and by what knowledge may we use and govern them? What, asks Religion, is the saving truth in the relation between the human soul and the soul of the universe? What is the way to culture? asks the scholar, to the balanced education of our tastes and sympathies as well as of our understandings? What is the true nature of ultimate Being? asks the philosopher. But the artist asks simply: What does Beauty say? And in the lifelong attempt to approximate some answer to that question he finds his true task—a task of long pain but also of strange peace. As Robert Browning asserts, this world

... means intensely, and means good;
To find its meaning is my meat and drink.

And again:

Art remains the one way possible
Of speaking truth, to mouths like mine at least.

Art may tell a truth
Obliquely, do the thing shall breed the thought,
Nor wrong the thought, missing the mediate word.
So may you paint your picture, twice show truth,
Beyond mere imagery on the wall,—
So, note by note, bring music from your mind,
Deeper than ever e'en Beethoven dived,—
So write a book shall mean beyond the facts,
Suffice the eye and save the soul beside.

There speaks, and not in weak whispers, an apostle of Art,
a lord of Literature.

GEORGE HERBERT CLARKE.

Queen's University, Canada.

SEASCAPE

A foreground of white sand
That glitters in the whiteness of the sun.
Behind . . . a curving wall of green,
And in this setting, jewel-like, the sea!

It is as mystic as I dreamed it was—
Ready with question and its own surprise.
It beckons—and the white sails flutter by,
Questing the pathway that it opens wide
To all the far adventure of the world!

I watch the gleam of sunset on the sails—
I, who will never wander; never sweep,
With long-drawn tides on other curving shores,
Or gather riches from such voyaging.

Yet I,
Shall store the memory of the lapping waves,
A whispered music, friendly, more than strange;
A secret melody to soothe my soul!
And all this color that irradiates—
Blue, green, rose, purple, amethyst—
A visionary glimpse of the divine!

This is my argosy—close held, and fast;
Brought home like treasure, from the sea!

MAY HARRIS.

Naples, Italy.

THE EQUATION OF THE ESSAY

The difference between the familiar letter and the essay is fundamentally one of the personal equation, which influences the nature and completeness of the communication of experience among men. The trite old figure of the stage as life will illustrate this difference quite clearly. Lamb is our temporary Hamlet and the central figure on the stage. Let us bring Wordsworth on: that is one equation. Now Bernard Barton: that is another. Miss Hutchinson: a third. But we are the audience out in front, are Antiquity for whom Lamb said he wrote; and we make an entirely new equation. Lamb to Wordsworth, or to Barton, or to any individual, is not Lamb to us. Whatever this difference is, it is what makes the essay one thing and the familiar letter another.

Our first need is to examine several letters on the same theme and to see how and why they differ. Then we must relate them to an essay on the same subject. Lamb gives us the very material we want. In April, 1825, he wrote three letters, those to Wordsworth, Barton, and Miss Hutchinson, on his release from employment at the East India Company; in these letters he began to mull ideas that later appear in his essay "The Superannuated Man". Thus "Superannuation" will give us our theme, and we have only to observe what variations the personal equation has worked upon it.

Lamb's letter to Wordsworth brings us nearest the essay; it is the most literary of the three letters we shall examine. Neither of the others is as consciously written; neither contains so many ideas in as nearly their essay form. What is the incentive for this literary effort? Wordsworth, none other. It is the case of an essayist to a poet, a scion of Antiquity. This letter reveals more of the thought, imagination, and feeling of the Essay than the other letters do; it is the most written-out. One instance is enough. Compare this to Wordsworth, "I came home For Ever on Tuesday in last week", with this to Barton, "I came home for ever!". The whole story is in those capital letters, with their greater effort to secure the

artistic emphasis and suitable context necessary for literary communication.

The letter to Barton is the most familiar of the three. Such expressions as "I am free B. B.—free as air!", "deuce take me", "fag, fag, fag", are not addressed to a Wordsworth. They suggest a more approachable soul, one who permits carelessness, who does not demand respect. Although more in the familiar vein, this letter is less revealing of Lamb's thought, feeling, and imagination than the Wordsworth letter is.

The letter to Miss Hutchinson also shows a subtly changed manner. It is not written-out like the Wordsworth letter or dotted with familiarities like the Barton letter. And it is not *written* to a man. The "bird told me" sort of thing marks this letter as addressed to a woman. Besides, there is a certain domestic turn in the language. Furthermore, a distinctly felt barrier to the real Lamb makes this letter the least personal of all, in spite of a comparatively informal style, reminding us that a man's attitude to a woman is often informal, seldom familiar.

Now what do our characterizations of these letters show? Just this: a varying personal equation. Each letter describes its recipient almost as much as its writer. And this is just what any significant speech on the stage or in life does; it communicates something in terms of a personal equation. Let us return to our figure of the stage and see what the difference is between Lamb's communication to characters on his stage and his communication to us, the audience. For these are the types of communication of the letter and of the essay respectively; at least, so it seems to me. And the difference in relationship between Lamb and the character and Lamb and us is the reason why the letter is more personal, but the Essay more revealing of the personality of Lamb.

I will call the relation between Lamb and Wordsworth the personal equation and the relation between Lamb and his audience the impersonal equation. On his stage Lamb is one man to Wordsworth, another to Barton, and a third to Miss Hutchinson. These different selves have a general similarity, but subtle differences which result form the personal equation. Since

these different selves are all Lamb, any single relationship is at best a partial communication of himself. Only to the audience is Lamb all his selves, a complete personality. His personal equation to any individual has human limitations; his impersonal equation to his audience has none but artistic ones. It is profoundly egoistic.

Only in the essay can Lamb be himself alone; only in the essay can he give the exact personal value to each thought and feeling unmodified by a Wordsworth or a Barton. In the essay his thought and feeling can be addressed to an impersonal Antiquity, Contemporaneity, or Posterity, whose one requirement is art. The letter shows us Lamb as he was with men. The essay shows us Lamb as he was with himself, the dreams he could tell no friend but Antiquity, the witticisms that could be overheard but never listened to, the little illusions cherished in solitude, the odd villainies that found a thought but no ear; in short, the real man that even friends could never quite know.

In yet another way the personal equation defeats the full revelation of personality in the letter, and that is in the style. There is a pronounced tendency in the personal letter to let the friend who receives it fill in the individual expression and gesture necessary to complete each thought. At least, self-consciousness keeps these marks of style subdued and restrains the freely mannered writing necessary to communicate personality in the style itself. When a friend speaks we do not have to see his face and hands to understand the fine shades of his meaning, because familiarity comes to our aid. But when a stranger speaks we watch his face and hands in order to complete our understanding. As an essayist Lamb puts his face and hands, even his body, into his writing, and so more completely reveals himself to all men. In the essay no constraint is put upon his gestures by a personal equation. In the letter what must be, or is, left to silence makes it personal for two people, but in the essay what is revealed makes it personal for all men.

Much of what is left to silence in the letter can be captured in two phrases: the freedom of the ego, and the "evocative sorcery" of language, to use Baudelaire's phrase. For the ego is

modified in the letter, as in society; in the essay it is free, as in art. And the language of the letter is principally that of statement; the language of the essay that of suggestion, the "evocative sorcery" of art. Upon this power of suggestion depends much of the completeness of communication which marks the essay as opposed to the letter. In illustration of what I have just said, which sums up the central distinction that I wish to make, let me quote from each letter the passage describing Lamb's feelings after his release, and then set beside these quotations the closest passage from the essay.

To Wordsworth: "The incomprehensibleness of my condition overwhelmed me. It was like passing from life into eternity. Every year to be as long as three, *i. e.*, to have three times as much real time (time that is my own) in it! But that tumultuousness is passing off, and I begin to understand the nature of the gift."

To Barton: "Take it briefly, that for a few days I was painfully oppressed by so mighty a change, but it is becoming daily more natural to me. . . . I will live another fifty years; or, if I live but ten, they will be thirty, reckoning the quantity of real time in them, *i. e.*, the time that is a man's own."

To Miss Hutchinson: "Faith, for some days I was staggered; could not comprehend the magnitude of my deliverance; was confused, giddy; knew not whether I was on my head or my heel, as they say. But those giddy feelings have gone away, and my weather-glass stands a degree or two above Content."

Many of the individual qualities of these letters appear even in these quotations of the same thought. In one of the letters Lamb feels that "words are vain" to express what he wishes. But let us see what words will do for him in the essay. "For the first day or two I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the Old Bastile, suddenly let loose after a forty years' confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have his Time all to himself."

And now on the subject of time, inviting comparison with the letters, let us see the free ego and the "evocative sorcery" of the essay again at work. "I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For *that* is the only true Time, which a man can properly call his own, that which he has all to himself; the rest, though in some sense he may be said to live it, is other people's time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at least multiplied for me threefold. My ten next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum."

Need I say more? The much more personal and complete communication of Lamb's experience in the essay is surely apparent. There his ego is all written-out; there the impersonal equation secures to him the necessary conditions for the terrible intimacy of art.

Suppose we conclude, then, that what is left to silence in the letter is explained by the personal equation, and what is revealed in the essay is explained by the impersonal equation, which frees a man to talk about himself with the individual magic that turns his mind inside out. In large part these equations make the difference between the letter and the essay, and the degree of communication one gets in each. For me "A Superannuated Man" reveals more of the sea-change of Lamb's ego than do all his letters on the same theme. And, in the words of a wise and cultivated man, "the only excuse a man has for writing is that he express himself, that he reveal to others the kind of world reflected in the mirror of his soul." At least, the best excuse.

GEORGE WILLIAMSON.

Claremont, California.

STUART P. SHERMAN: THE ILLINOIS ARNOLD

I love rows. But of all forms of row, my favorite is the wordy warfare of opposed and militant literary schools. When I learned last summer of the death of Stuart Sherman, therefore, my first thought was, not the devout "Requiescat in pace" appropriate to the occasion, but "Who will fight with Mr. Mencken now?" Of course, Mr. Mencken will go on fighting; it is his nature to. But there is little fun in watching a one-sided battle; and with the removal of Sherman from the field, there is no critic in the conservative camp who can meet the warrior of the *Mercury* with the necessary combination of erudition and wit, stylistic force and controversial skill, to make a sporting event of it. This is a great misfortune; for one of the most heartening symptoms of the present age in American literature has been the enormous increase in the power of literary criticism. And that increase is directly due to the fact that critics have stripped off the gentlemanly kid gloves they wore in the days of Messrs. Stedman and Mabie, and now appear in public wearing brass knuckles.

Criticism of a living writer is always a dangerous business—not, I think, because our opinion of a contemporary is invariably biased, but because a writer who is really alive is constantly changing. Label him realist on the basis of the four books he has already published, and he is quite apt to come out next year with a new volume in which he reveals himself as a high romanticist. This is disconcerting. But now the canon of Sherman's works is unfortunately complete, and a precious half-dozen volumes are all we shall have of him. It begins to be possible, then, to form a judgment of the man as a whole.

Born in Iowa in 1881, Stuart Sherman took Horace Greeley's advice in reverse; as a young man, he went East, first to Williams, and then to Harvard, where he received his doctor's degree in 1906. During the next decade, at Northwestern and Illinois, as editor of school and college texts, as contributor to *The Nation*, as co-editor of the *Cambridge History of American Literature*, he was beginning to build up a reputation as a

scholar-critic who actually had something to say and could say it with considerable force and point.

The appearance, in 1917, of his first volume, *Matthew Arnold: How to Know Him*, sums up, in a sense, this period of preparation. More important, for our purposes, it points the way clearly to the future. In this volume, which is, incidentally, the best study of Arnold that I have seen, Sherman reveals himself as an enthusiastic Arnoldian. He approves Arnold's reverence for the classics, his severe discrimination, his passion for controversy, his missionary zeal, even his excursions into the outlandish realms of theology and morals and political theory—excursions so bitterly bewailed by that purest of belle-lettrists, George Saintsbury. I am inclined, myself, to think Saintsbury the nearer right; but there can be no question that Sherman is the better Arnoldian.

It is as a devout follower, then, of the sublime and superior Matthew that Sherman sets out to study his contemporaries. Now Arnold was above all a crusader, waging relentless war against British Philistinism. Sherman, likewise, in his first volume, *On Contemporary Literature*, published also in 1917, goes forth to war. His particular opponent, in this battle of the books, is Naturalism, which he defines as "a representation of life based on a theory of animal behavior." Arnoldian in his clarity and emphasis, Sherman leaves no doubt in the reader's mind as to just what he is driving at. The title-page of the book bears, as a text for the whole volume, this quotation from Arnold: "Man must begin, know this, where nature ends", which Sherman later repeats and amplifies in this form: "The great revolutionary task of the nineteenth-century thinkers was to put man into nature. The great task of twentieth-century thinkers is to get him out again." From the vantage-point of this critical platform, Sherman surveys contemporary literature, judging and condemning authors as they fall short of fulfilling the aim here indicated as their proper one.

The great exponent of naturalism in modern literature, Sherman finds, is Theodore Dreiser; Dreiser, therefore, is Sherman's particular aversion in whom he can see no literary excellence whatever. He is "the vulgarest voice yet heard in American

literature". He "colors the news". His method is "the certification of the unreal by the irrelevant". Less culpable than Dreiser, but addicted to Naturalism, and therefore literary sinners, Sherman finds most of the outstanding figures of modern literature. Wells is a "Utopian Naturalist", the advocate of pseudo-science, seeking to make "whim and the will of Wells prevail". Moore is an "Æsthetic Naturalist", a "pretty writer", whose realistic novels are worthless because inconsistent with the rest of his literary output, and therefore insincere. Synge is an "Exotic", viewing man only as a spectacle to be enjoyed. All are essentially bad.

While the particular doctrine which Sherman is here propounding is less reminiscent of Arnold than of Professor Babbitt of Harvard, the critical method is the method of Arnold. Like Arnold, Sherman is judicial. He definitely places every author whom he handles; the sheep are clearly separated from the goats. Again like Arnold, Sherman finds most of his contemporaries wanting. Like Arnold, he demands "high seriousness" and the expression of "moral ideas" in his authors. Thus Meredith, of all the authors considered in the volume, receives fullest praise, not because he is a great literary artist, but because he is a great spiritual leader. Many even of Arnold's minor traits reappear in Sherman: his snobbishness, which regards Mark Twain as a bit vulgar; his trick of hammering on a theme until not even the stupidest reader in a stupid public can miss the point; even his curious antipathy to Shelley.

Some of these Arnoldian borrowings are clearly defects. But along with them Sherman learned from Arnold two lessons of the highest importance to a critic. He learned to perfection the art of critical exposition; he is the most masterly reporter of literature in our time. Whether he approves or condemns, he never leaves an author without giving the reader an unmistakably clear notion of just what that author is like. I heartily disagree with Sherman's judgment of Wells; yet I take away from that essay a picture clearer and sharper in outline, a picture far more representative of Wells himself, than from half a dozen gushing tributes of praise by enthusiastic disciples of that omniscient seer. Closely allied with this indebtedness to Arnold is a second,

of perhaps greater importance. I have long held that Arnold's greatest critical virtue lies in his ability to get at the heart of an author—to point out and lay aside all the minor qualities and characteristics with which an author is often mistakenly identified, and coming at last to the central core, to place his finger on the essential thing, and say, "This is the man." This, the best of the Arnoldian elements in Sherman, can most clearly be seen in his study of Henry James. Here Sherman is bothered by no disturbing questions of naturalism and humanism; his mind is free to work untroubled by the moralistic bias; and the result is the finest study yet written of that fascinating subject. Most studies of James lose themselves in discussions of his style, or his realism, or his international viewpoint. All these Sherman examines, but only as veils to be drawn aside, until at last we stand before the man himself, who in spite of all his talk about "provincialism" and "saturation", is at heart an idealist, an "aesthetic idealist", whose whole artistic life was one prolonged and incessant quest for beauty. This is the insight of a great critic.

In spite, however, of all these evident borrowings, Sherman was too much of a positive personality to be a mere copyist. Agreeing with Arnold in so many points, he nevertheless diverged sharply from his master in one respect of the highest importance. Unlike Arnold, who preserved the Anglican contempt for Puritanism long after he had lost Anglican dogma, Sherman is a Puritan. With Puritan distrust of a mere literature which does not further the cause of morality, he declares that "Mark Twain does not give us much help toward realizing our best selves." He praises Bennett for asserting that "the great principles, spiritual and moral, remain intact." More characteristically Puritan still is his glorification of the "impulse to refrain."

For all its obvious faults, *On Contemporary Literature* is a fighting book, therefore an exhilarating book. Discerning clearly the two main streams of contemporary American criticism, Sherman definitely ranks himself with the neo-classics—Shorey, More, Brownell, and Babbitt. More than that, he here reveals himself the ablest warrior of the company. Far more alive to contemporary currents than More, more active and more productive

than Brownell, he is also far more sane and sensible than the erratic and lop-sided anti-Romanticist, Professor Babbitt, from whom, however, he has obviously learned much.

Between the publication of this volume, and that of its successor, *Americans*, in 1922, many things happened. For one thing, there was a war. In Sherman, no cloistered recluse, but a man very much alive and very much aware of the world about him, the events of 1914-1918 produced a mental revolution. One of Sherman's most engaging traits appears in his habit of starting off each of his volumes with a preface, in which he warns the reader, with the utmost candor, of his exact purpose in that particular volume. The Preface to *Americans* thus tells us just what the war had done to Sherman. It found him an Arnoldian; it left him something perilously close to a Rotarian. In the volumes of 1917, he had been a cosmopolitan, a literary catholic, deriving his doctrines from the great central tradition of Europe. He is now a nationalist, an American, almost "a hundred-percent-American." With war-heightened patriotism, which includes of necessity a hatred of all things Teutonic, he announces his intention of revealing his vision of "the spirit of America as the clear-eyed among our poets and statesmen have seen her." His purpose is "to encourage readers to keep open the channel of their national traditions and to scrutinize contemporary literature in the light of their national past." With this object in view, he selects ten eminent Americans, and attempts to trace through them the presence or the absence of this great American tradition. This tradition, as a reader of the preceding volume might have guessed, he identifies with Puritanism.

But before he proceeds to his constructive labors, he has a word to say to the opponents of the American tradition in literature—to the radical critics of the younger generation. He is ready now to cross swords with Mr. Mencken. In the first essay of the book, a piece of writing as lively as any flowing from the pen of his adversary, Sherman delivers the first blow in that six-year duel which has been to me the most stirring spectacle in modern American letters. Thus he pictures Mr. Mencken arriving on the literary scene:

He leaps from the saddle with sabre flashing, stables his horse in the church, shoots the priest, hangs the professors, and exiles the academy, burns the library and the university, and, amid the smoking ashes, erects a new school of criticism on modern German principles, which he traces through Spingarn to Goethe, but which I should be inclined to trace rather to Eckermann.

But Sherman could wield other weapons than the Menckonian bludgeon. From Arnold he has learned the exasperating trick of getting on higher ground than his adversary, and talking down to him. With a mixture of slyness and superiority worthy of Arnold himself, Sherman ends the essay by quoting with deceptive calmness a little maxim from Joubert, that is absolutely devastating when applied to Mencken: "Ou il n'y a point de delicatesses, il n'y a point de litterature."

I shall not attempt to follow in detail Sherman's heroic endeavor to trace the great American and Puritan tradition through the works of Franklin and Emerson and Hawthorne and Whitman. As individual portraits these essays are excellent, particularly that on Whitman, which reveals in Sherman a breadth and sympathy sadly lacking in his previous volume. But as pieces of evidence in Sherman's case for Puritanism, they have the common and rather grave fault of proving the opposite of what they are meant to prove. The real strength of these men—and Sherman's fairness and clarity of exposition should make the fact clear to the dullest reader—is not that they are representative Puritans, but rather that they are all in some degree in revolt against Puritanism. They are the radicals, the revolutionaries, moderns—in other words, the Menckens.

I know I am merely repeating one of the platitudes of literary history when I remark that there comes a time in the growth of every great critic when he tires of being merely a critic, and aspires to the reputation of a great thinker. Thus Arnold, in mid-career, turns educational philosopher, biblical critic, and prophet of religious liberalism. Thus Lowell emerges into political thought with *Democracy and Other Addresses*. Thus even Poe, with whom literature was almost completely divorced from life, in his melancholy last days, his brain weakened by dis-

ease and disappointment and hunger, writes *Eureka*. And thus, in these last days, we have seen Mr. Mencken turn politician, theologian, philosopher, and moralist—all the while denying, with roars of anger, that he was doing anything of the sort.

About 1920, Sherman was seized by the same fever. There had, of course, been symptoms of it in his work from the start, but in the companion volume to *Americans* (*The Genius of America*, published in 1923) the disease is first revealed in its acute stage. Here we have a curious instance of reaction. The leading tendency of American criticism, from the founding of the *North American Review* to the last volume of James Huneker, had been the very gradual separation of literature and morals—a separation faulty in theory, but exceedingly salutary in its effects. Against this tendency, Sherman resolutely set his face. Believing that the art-for-art's-sake theory is responsible for the present low esteem in which the arts are held by the great majority of good Americans, believing that if the critic calls art play you cannot expect the business man to take art seriously, Sherman attempts to restore literature to its proper place as the teacher of sound morals. Theoretically, this is sound, but it invariably leads the critic who attempts to realize it in practice into fearful aberrations of judgment. Sherman is generally a good reasoner, but under the influence of this doctrine, he brings forth such strange pseudo-syllogisms as the following:

An artist is a man living in society. A great artist is a great man living in a great society. When a great artist expresses himself completely, it is found invariably that he has expressed, not merely himself, but also the dominant thoughts and feeling of the men with whom he lives.

The second leading theme of *The Genius of America* is again the defence of Puritanism against Mr. Mencken and his Teutonic hordes. It was a gallant attempt, as are all defences of discredited causes; so persuasive, indeed, is Sherman's dialectic that at first reading it sounds plausible, almost convincing. But before we agree with the persuasive Sherman that Puritanism is a novel and beautiful ideal, let us consider how he defines that much-muddled term:

Puritanism is not a fixed form of life; it is a formative spirit, an urgent exploring and creative spirit . . . The Puritan is an iconoclast, an image-breaker; and when he is convicted of self-idolatry, he is the first, beautiful and strong in wrath, to raise the hammer and shatter his own image.

He is not morally intolerant; he is perpetually dissatisfied with the past; he is the formative force in that elusive phenomenon, the modern spirit. His true examples are Milton and Bunyan and Emerson. Now the trouble with Sherman's definition of the Puritan is that it is too inclusive. If his conception is correct, then Mr. Mencken is a Puritan. And so is Mr. Wells. And so are Messrs. Sinclair Lewis, and Floyd Dell, and James Huneker, and all the radical army with whom Sherman is waging bitter war. Obviously, when Mr. Sherman crowns the Puritan with a halo of light, and when Mr. Mencken hits him with a brick, they are looking at different creatures—creatures, indeed, of different species. The Puritan whom Sherman praises is the historical Puritan; the Puritan whom Mencken attacks is his degenerate descendant. And the difference between them is the difference between Martin Luther and William Jennings Bryan.

Sherman, as I have suggested, was far indeed from being the conventional cloistered scholar, as he shows in *The Genius of America*. He was a man of his time, highly susceptible to the influence of his surroundings, and reflecting their pressure in his works. This is an excellent preservative against fossilization, but it has its dangers. The young man who had emerged from Harvard an Arnoldian and a devout classicist had become, in 1923, professor of English and dean of men at the University of Illinois, one of the largest of that saurian species, the western state university. In the process he had also become a nationalist, a prohibitionist, a political democrat. And thus we find the former student of *Culture and Anarchy* defending "education by the people" as practised in the western universities against the educational snobbishness of privately endowed eastern institutions, and attacking such defenders of the older culture as Mrs. Gerould, the female Arnold, originally of New Eng-

land but now of Princeton, New Jersey. This is a startling about-face. But there are still, in this his worst volume, echoes of better things from the past, and faint forecasts of better things to come. With charming inconsistency, in the essay called *Vocation*, an essay Emersonian in thought, and even in style, Sherman attacks the mid-western ideal of "Service" as embodied in the Y. M. C. A. and the "foreign field". He acknowledges the truth of the old Arnoldian criticism of American life as dull and ugly. And in the last essay of the volume, he turns once more to the aristocratic and Arnoldian conception of university education—education, not as a means of uplifting the masses, but as an engine for producing the "governors of society". Wide enough in his sympathies to love both literature and life, he sees that "every attempt to make an educated man without connecting him with the historical tradition is myopic and absurd; but, on the other hand, all the tradition that does not come to a focus in the present hour is out of focus; it is presbyopic and inefficient".

The high point of Sherman's acquired mid-western Rotarianism is reached in the opening essay of his 1924 volume, *Points of View*. In the essay which bears the title, *Towards an American Type*, Sherman, disregarding the lifeless dogmas which bear the name of religion, sets out in his perennial search for the true American religion as manifested in American life. America, he discovers, has a religion; and the gods of its worship are five. They are Cleanliness, Health, Swift Mobility, Publicity, and Athletics. So far, so good. These are the gods of America. The curious thing is that Sherman, instead of recognizing them as the tin idols they are, finds them true and beautiful deities. What do these gods really mean? Cleanliness? Schools with tiled and nickel-plated lavatories, and a hundred dusty volumes in the library. Swift Mobility? The limousine at the front door and "Show That Fellow the Door" on the piano. Publicity? Billboards on the side of Mount Washington. Health? Doctor Almus Pickerbaugh. Athletics? Ten-thousand-dollar coaches and two-thousand-dollar professors. It is hard to see how anyone with a mentality higher than that of a realtor could be deceived. But one must recognize this about Sher-

man. Keen-minded and open-eyed in the perception of facts, in their interpretation he was one of the most hopeless optimists on record. He is so determined to believe well of America that he can give his admiration to these things; things which seem, to a critic less fortunate in hope, the very demons that beset us. Though facile optimism is an amiable weakness, it is a strange trait in an ex-Arnoldian. There are other blots on the volume—Sherman's curious attempt to prove that Samuel Butler was personally a cad and a blackguard; true enough, in all probability, but of no weight whatever in a discussion of Butler as a writer.

But these sins are more than redeemed by certain signs of change even in *Points of View*. Some of Sherman's major errors seem, in fact, to spring from the excess of one of his virtues—his openness and receptivity. For in spite of all his dogmas and prejudices, he was if anything over-susceptible to the current of life about him—a rare enough fault in a professor. And as this quality had led him into strange ways, it was finally to lead him into the truth. A man with Sherman's mental alertness and breadth of taste could not long survey the spectacle of modern American literature without finding there some qualities to admire. In this same volume, then, which contains Sherman's worst yielding to his uncouth environment we find the first symptoms of his growing sympathy with our changing literature. He begins to profess admiration for the "Dreiser-Hecht school of monoptic novelists and for the Menckonian school of monoptic critics." He sees that the hate-sharpened satire of these men is the proper corrective for our customary rose-pink idealism. This admiration is, of course, hedged about with reservations. But his principal ground of quarrel with these authors—that they are not sufficiently in love with American life, and are therefore incapable of understanding it fully—is an objection by no means pointless.

It is always interesting, and frequently productive of high comedy, to apply a man's dogmas to his own acts. If complex understanding is born only of love, we can well apply to *On Contemporary Literature* Sherman's own adjective, "monoptic". When that work was written, Sherman was very obviously not

in love with the greater part of contemporary literature. And it is certainly true that as his liking for contemporary literature grows more and more complete, so does his criticism of it gain in breadth and soundness. How sound was Sherman's taste, and how keen his insight when that taste and insight were free to function, unclouded by perverting doctrines, is admirably demonstrated by the two essays which redeem the errors of *Points of View*—the studies of Disraeli and Sinclair Lewis.

The first of these illustrates well Sherman's increasing ability to get rid of a dogma when the dogma is in the way. In political ideas, all men are born Gladstonians or Disraelites; Sherman was a Gladstonian. But on approaching the two men, in spite of his conviction that Gladstone's was the purer influence in politics, he succumbs to Dizzy's charm, and gives us a portrait of the author-statesman fit to stand beside Lytton Strachey's. The literary critic has at last overcome the Puritan moralist.

Better still is the study of Sinclair Lewis. That Sinclair Lewis, who has made "Rotarian" a cuss-word—I use it myself in that sense—should be the first of modern American writers to win Sherman's full approval is at first sight astonishing. The essay convinces me that Sherman's Rotarianism was merely a superficial and transitional phase, due to the pressure of environment. His sympathy with Lewis is the result of something far more fundamental. A closer inspection shows the two men with much in common: both possess alert intelligence and keen observation; both are possessed by the critical spirit—Sherman's deep-rooted Arnoldism finding satisfaction in the truth that Lewis's novels are all "a criticism of contemporary life with special reference to its interest and beauty." On the other hand, Lewis, like Sherman, is Arnoldian in spirit, condemning in Americal life the very things—standardization, materialism, ugliness—that would assuredly have annoyed the urbane and superior Matthew. It is not difficult to see, then, why Sherman concludes that Lewis "is conspiring with the spirit of the times to become the most interesting and important novelist in America." At the close of the essay, Sherman, fired with enthusiasm, breaks into prophecy:

Eventually, if Mr. Lewis does not wish to pass for a hardened pessimist he will have to produce a hero qualified to register in some fashion the result of his own quest for the desirable; he will have to give us his Portrait of a Lady, his Warrington and his Colonel Newcome. Meanwhile I am very well content to applaud the valor of his progress through Vanity Fair.

And, as if in answer, Mr. Lewis writes *Arrowsmith*.

My Dear Cornelia (1924), that curious Irish stew of literary criticism, Platonic dialogue on morals, and moon-struck sentimental romance, with melodramatic episodes thrown in to point the moral, adds nothing to Sherman's reputation. But it is interesting to the student of Sherman's career, showing more fully than any other of his works one shining facet of his many-sided mind. In his work at the University of Illinois, Sherman was of necessity brought into close and frequent contact with that strange apparition, the younger generation. Now Sherman was the kind of man who could not be long in contact with any man, book, or institution without making a valiant attempt at understanding. And he made heroic efforts to understand this so un-Arnoldian younger generation. The trait appears earlier than this book; the *Genius of America* bears as its subtitle *Studies in Behalf of the Younger Generation*. And his real charge against Mencken had been that Mencken was undermining the morals of that already sadly undermined tribe. But here he makes his first avowed attempt to see what the younger generation is about, to understand it fully, and if possible to sympathize with its aims. Setting up Cornelia as the representative of the conservative viewpoint, the viewpoint of the shocked elders, he answers in person her attacks. After thus conducting a dialogue between the two halves of his mind, he arrives, with characteristic optimism, at the conclusion that the younger generation is after all sane and sound, and that if it will only learn to obey the Eighteenth Amendment, it will go to heaven along with its sainted ancestors.

With this work, the second phase of Sherman's career comes to an end. In the spring of 1924, the management of the New York *Herald-Tribune* summoned Sherman from Illinois to take

the editorship of that journal's long moribund book review. This act produced two important results. It raised the *Tribune's* review, now renamed *Books*, from a position of utter insignificance to that of the liveliest and ablest weekly book review in the country. What is more to our purpose, it accelerated mightily those changes in Sherman which we have seen incipient in his previous work. Removed from an academic environment to the swirl and bustle of New York, brought into intimate contact with literature in the making, no man as thoroughly alive as Sherman could long have held the views he had previously professed. Fully aware of this change in himself he sets it forth with engaging frankness in the preface to his next and last volume, *Critical Woodcuts*. In this preface, only four pages in length, there is summed up a whole literary confession of faith.

I have never taken a vow to carry any opinion unaltered to the grave: and if it can be proved tonight that I have learned absolutely nothing since morning, I shall be dismayed.

The first duty of a commentator on current literature, as it appears to me, is to present a fairly full and veracious report of what is going on.

[The critic is] a scout seeking for the main channel of intellectual and emotional activity in his own tract of time, recurring constantly to the point where the full rush of living waters comes in from the past, and eagerly searching for the point where the flood breaks out of the backwater and through the dams, and streams away into the future.

All human activities have, up their sleeves, an ulterior object and ultimate justification in happier living; and it is rather specially the "function" of critics to be engaged in an incessant, untiring exploration in quest of "the good life".

Patient search usually discovers some refreshing virtue wherever there has been exhibited any unusual display of energy.

From those five statements only, one might easily deduce all of Sherman's best qualities. I see in the first, his openness and receptivity; in the second, his masterly ability as a literary expositor; in the third, his interest in ideas and his literary descent

from Arnold; in the fourth, his profound interest in morals; and in the fifth, his undaunted resolution to find good in everything.

In form, *Critical Woodcuts* differs widely from Sherman's earlier books. The papers composing it were written as leading articles for *Books*; they are therefore much shorter than the studies in the previous volumes, averaging about three thousand words apiece. They differ widely in method also. All of Sherman's earlier criticism has been decidedly judicial. The authors under review are definitely placed, both with regard to contemporary literature, and in comparison with the great figures of the past. In these shorter studies, however, the attempt is rather to tell the reader what the author is like, to pick out his salient qualities, though there is, of necessity, a certain amount of implied approval or condemnation lying behind the mere exposition. But far more important than these mere surface changes is the great inner change that the volume marks. The book is full of about-faces. In 1916 Sherman had unsparingly condemned Wells. In 1925, the tone of the essay on Wells is one of high commendation. Listen to his apostrophe to the erstwhile "pseudo-scientific naturalist":

You are no realist, Mr. Wells. But you have been a brave myth-maker and a heartening poet to the Intellectuals of your time. You have turned an entire generation of novelists and readers from contemplating the fatal forces of heredity and environment and instinct to considering the godlike power of an intelligent will to control instinct, heredity, and environment.

Wells, then, is a Humanist, after all. Wells is, however, a gentleman of fairly well-established reputation. To discover excellence in him is no great feat. It is more surprising to find Sherman lauding Sherwood Anderson as "the impassioned interpreter of day-dreams of common people." It is still more astounding to find him defending D. H. Lawrence against the attacks of Doctor Collins. In 1916, Sherman had rashly asserted: "If anything is dead, the æsthetic movement that took shape in the seventies is dead." But in 1925, considering the worst of the bad boys of that movement, Sherman decides that

"Oscar Wilde's works are in English literature, and they are likely to remain there."

But there was always one adversary who could be depended on to induce Sherman to seize his Damascus blade and sally forth to battle. And that he could still wield his weapon with old-time skill is proved by the essay entitled *H. L. Mencken as Liberator*. His first blow lands on Mencken's most sensitive spot—his carefully concealed, Heine-like vein of poetry. But over this hidden poet, Sherman explains, lies a blond Nordic—"a hard fighter, a hard eater, a hard drinker, a hard boaster, reverencing women but keeping them in the kitchen—a man, in short, with no sentiment or nonsense about him." Another of Mencken's little failings, according to Sherman, is his lack of reverence for the truth, as evidenced by his perversions of literary history. Hard hits, all of these; but the worst is yet to come:

I have sworn to myself not to end this review on the note of detraction, but to bring it back to the note of sincere admiration on which it started. Though Mencken lacks the patience, the discrimination, and the 'organ for truth' which the critic of a civilized minority ought to possess, he has other great talents. He is, as I have said elsewhere, alive. He has been the occasion of life in others. He has the rare gift of stirring people up and making them strike an attitude, and at least start on the long process of becoming intelligent beings. And he is beginning to quote from good authors. He is beginning to quote shyly from the New Testament in the Latin of the Vulgate. What may that bode? No one who has followed his work as carefully and hopefully as I have these many years can have failed to recognize that his obvious calling is to some form of ministry. From the first he has exhibited the desk-beating proclivities, the over-strained voice, the tumid phrases which one associates with the popular orator. Years ago I pointed out the absurdity of his presenting himself chiefly as an æsthetic interpreter when every drop of his blood seethes with moral passion and every beat of his heart summons him to moral propaganda.

Thus neatly he denies Mr. Mencken every quality which that gentleman has publicly claimed, and attributes to him just

those virtues most likely to cause him to emit loud roars of rage. And there is in the judgment just enough truth to make the accusation stick.

It was the fighter's last blow. In the summer of 1926, the world was shocked by the news of Sherman's death by drowning,—like Shelley, in the midst of his career. Thus did Mr. Mencken lose his best adversary, and American literature—what? Breadth of mind carries with it a certain dulling of the fighting edge. And though my critical sense tells me that the new Sherman is a vastly better critic than the old, my rejoicing has a tinge of regret. The moderns have lately had it rather too much their own way in criticism, and I for one have been delighted to see the banner of tradition upborne by so valiant and skilful a warrior as Sherman. While he fought for reaction, the cleverness was not all on one side. Surveying, nevertheless, the man on every side, considering his rare union of scholarship and life, of morality and openness of mind, his readiness to learn and grow, remembering his reasoning power, his vivacity of style, his Arnoldian keenness of insight, unique among living critics, I am inclined to call him the greatest American literary critic since the death of James Huneker.

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AMERICANISM IN LITERATURE

O. Henry in his *A Municipal Report* defends the rest of the the United States against the charge of Frank Norris that a novel could not be written about any other city than one of our three anointed "story cities"—New York, New Orleans, and San Francisco. "It is a bold and a rash deed to challenge in one sentence history, romance, and Rand and McNally," O. Henry remarks.

Yet my old teacher, Professor Brander Matthews, backed by Don Juan Valera, former ambassador to the United States, has made the boldness and rashness of Norris seem in comparison like the desperate hardihood of a cottontail rabbit waving his vanishing flag in the face of the full-mouthed hounds; for the Professor has challenged over 3,000,000 square miles of territory, millions, billions, trillions yet unborn, and all eternity.

The Professor says we Americans do not have, and, worse still, *never can have*, an American literature.

In his *What is American Literature?* he takes literary historians to task for "setting what must be termed American literature in opposition to English literature, of which it is only a subdivision. . . . It ought to be obvious that the literature of any language is one and indivisible." Don Juan Valera has warned us "that it was a delusion of national vanity to believe that there is or ever will be, 'anything that with legitimate and candid independence may be called American literature.' "

This, as Bret Harte might remark, is "rough on" our descendants of the ninety-ninth century, because, in spite of Mr. Menden, they may still be using the English language; and therefore, of necessity, writing not American, but English literature; for "To detach American literature from English literature is to deny the essential unity of the literature of our language."

There is healing for our wounded aspirations, however, as we take up our Bible. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life," we find. Moreover, a great British scholar lends us encouragement when we turn to *Latin Literature*, by J. W. Mac-kail, and read: "Latin, in one form or another, remained [after

the fall of the Roman Empire] an almost universal language; but we must speak henceforth of the literature of France or Spain or Britain, whether the work produced be written in a provincial dialect or in the international language handed down from the Empire and preserved by the Church."

Surely Americanism in literature is fairly evident by the beginning of the nineteenth century, with an ever-increasing note of nationalism as we come on down to the twentieth. By the mass effect of six major aspects and of several minor ones our literature shows that it has been produced not by a colonial-minded people who chanced merely to cease paying political tribute to Great Britain, but remained its intellectual vassal, but by a people of independent cultural consciousness.

For over a century we have differed from our transatlantic cousins by being more optimistic than they, less given to spiritual questioning, more democratic, more occupied with questions of the primitive, space conscious, and more humorous.

Space consciousness is practically a new thing, an American note that has scarcely any prototype in the literature of Europe outside of Russia. It may be objected that the other qualities are merely a question of relative emphasis. But it is just this question, of relative emphasis, which, more than anything else, determines the varied nationalities of the literatures of the last hundred years; for in their fundamental basis all modern literatures are the same.

The mere youth of our nation has produced several minor aspects whose mass effect, however, is potent in affirming that language does not determine literature. All unknowing, then, that the Professor was going to doom them to eternal deprivation of a mirroring of their age, the "one hundred per cent Americans" of the first quarter of the nineteenth century kept pouring out their hearts in the language of Shakespeare, but in a spirit somewhat alien to even such a "tyrant".

As the minds and souls of the two centuries began to diverge in the early period of the Republic, literature naturally expressed that crescent national consciousness in more ways than those already enumerated.

In some respects there was among us less national assertiveness. British literature is rich in battle lyrics; American literature comparatively poor therein, and as a whole it may be said that the military note is weak with us. For the battle lyric to flourish, it seems necessary that a country should look back through a glowing vista of years rich in the splendid achievements of its national solidarity. A nation acquires proud self-consciousness not through an isolated victory, however brilliant, but only through a long succession of them. Michael Drayton wrote *Agincourt*, one of the greatest battle lyrics in our language, three centuries ago; but it is significant that his poem stands alone in its greatness for more than two centuries until the vista of the years had deepened and been enriched enough to inspire Campbell, Tennyson, and others. In spite of the lack of depths of our historical perspective, we have produced in *High Tide at Gettysburg* the greatest lyric of man in armed conflict yet written in the English language. But, significantly enough it, too, stands pretty much alone in its greatness.

In at least five other minor ways has the newness of our country furthered the development of a purely American literature. As a whole, we show a greater willingness to try new things than do the British. For example, after Whitman at least, we have been more tolerant towards experiments in verse than they. The establishment of civilization in a new land, empty of many of its material equipments, forced us to become a nation of experimenters and inventors, and naturally our literature has reflected this trait of mind.

The newness of our country gives our short stories and novels a shallowness of vista; for among them there can be no *Ivanhoe* of the twelfth century, nor even a *Notre Dame*, though almost three centuries separate the plot of these two great novels. Nor do our short stories afford any just parallel to a *Sire de Maletroit's Door*. If an American writer attempts to write a novel dealing with his country in the time of *Ivanhoe*, he would necessarily have to deal with a race alien to our civilization, the Indians; and his novel would be poverty-stricken in historical and cultural suggestions, and deficient in a background of great world-moulding issues. Moreover, we would necessarily feel that what was

presented was largely guess work. The vast gulf of time into which we gaze when reading Flaubert's *Salammbô*, a tale of Carthage, can have no parallel with us.

A natural corollary to this deficiency in historical perspective is a shallowness of cultural suggestion. Early American æsthetics instinctively felt this, and pathetically they clamor about the glory of Niagara and the grandeur of the Mississippi. When one can be inspired by the Palisades of the Hudson or the prairies of Illinois, why, they demand, should one sigh for haunted castles and dim cathedral aisles? Yet between the lines it is easy to read, without thinking of such feats in legend building as *Rip Van Winkle* or *The Culprit Fay*, that they have an uneasy knowledge of Pope's line

"The proper study of mankind is man,"

his sorrows and aspirations, his victories and defeats, and not buffalo and river bluffs; and their envy of the richer cultural milieu in which Mrs. Radcliffe, Scott, and Thackeray move is easy to find in what they say, and equally easy to detect in American literature in what must be left unsaid so long as it deals with early American life.

As a whole, our literature is less scholarly than that of Great Britain. A greater proportion of it has been produced by men and women of wisdom's school of experience, perhaps, but certainly a lesser one by graduates of colleges. Our freedom from caste and our essential democracy has caused everyone who experienced the prompting to write to do so without feeling that he was presuming upon the rights of his betters.

The Brahmins of Boston regarded Mark Twain askance for the moment, but their disapproval by no means meant as much to him as did the indifference of the cultured and titled literary class of Edinburgh, after they had satisfied their curiosity, meant to Burns. Neither Mark Twain nor any other writer has ever depended so largely upon the approval, and striven to reflect the ideals, of one social stratum in this country as the mass effect of British literature impresses one has been dominantly the case across the Atlantic. And that stratum has been one of some scholarly background. American literature has gained in sim-

plicity of expression and motive, in vigor and directness, but it has lost in urbanity, polish, and richness of words whose haunting suggestions unfold the storied past.

Our newness and our democracy and the very length and breadth of our country has kept us from falling into one of the dangers that in some ways has beset French literature and into which that of Great Britain fell so markedly in the time of Pope. We have never had one literary center ruling tyrannically the realm of letters as London pretty much has for our transatlantic cousins in spite of the brief brilliancy of Edinburgh. Our cultural center has in chronological order been Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston (or perhaps one might say Concord). And at no time has any of these centers held the undisputed power that has invested London for almost a century and has been hers for longer periods than that in the past.

If this lack of critical dominance by one center, with its almost necessary narrowness of outlook, has helped our literature to attain individuality and variety, there has been one counteracting influence working against these qualities. Our literature is more racially and dialectically simple than that of our mother country.

With us there is no England, Ireland, Wales, and Scotland, but just the United States. The past has not made us inheritors of communities where during the stagnation of half a dozen centuries dialects have grown up that defy the understanding of even an educated man. Tennyson's *Northern Farmer* is almost a foreign language, and he might have duplicated, or increased, its difficulty in a score of places in the British Isles. Neither Lowell, Page, nor Cable ever get half as far away from the "King's English" as do a number of British writers who represent the speech of no newly arrived East Side immigrant, whose sons and daughters will speak good "United States", but of men and women whose ancestry has been British for a thousand years.

But as yet, those dominant qualities of the American spirit mentioned above, whose embodiment in words eloquent of thought and style makes literature, have not been touched upon.

Space consciousness is a quality which shows itself conspicuously in the literature of a country which has large stretches of territory that are sparsely settled. The loneliness and the freedom of the empty spaces seem always present in the artistic consciousness of such a nation. Ruskin gives us one magnificent passage of space consciousness when he describes the flight of a migrating swallow, but necessarily the route of the bird is Continental and not British; and as a whole the English are certainly not space conscious. The Russians are, naturally enough, as *Taras Bulba* and many another work proves. Harte, Miller, and Moody, to name but a few, attain splendid effects of vast earthly spaces in American literature. But perhaps better than anywhere else, space consciousness is to be found in Canadian poetry.

A corollary to empty spaces is a development in literature of the spirit of the primitive. Cooper, Bret Harte, and Jack London show it preëminently, while what one might almost call an entire literature of it has grown up in the amazing multiplication of short-story magazines (and moving pictures) of the wild West and Southwest that was, is, and never was. Kipling may write a *Jungle Book*, but one is always conscious that in the background is a civilization which was complicated and subtle centuries before Columbus began to dream.

There is a saying that "the sound of the sea was always in the ear of the Greek." This might be applied to the inhabitants of the British Isles, as it cannot be in anything like the same measure to us; and naturally the romance and power of the ocean has appealed decidedly less to our writers than to theirs, in spite of the fact that we have in Cooper one of the greatest novelists of the sea.

The great French critic Taine has suffered an undeserved eclipse; for literature is moulded by environment to a greater extent than most modern critics are inclined to believe. Three thousand miles of ocean and elbow room for all have left their impress upon us in many ways. In part they account for that emphasis upon humor which Viscount Bryce finds in our national life. With new regions to develop, unemployment, which assuredly breeds mass discontent and pessimism, has

had little chance to take the edge off our sense of humor. Therefore we have never faced the tragedy of emigration, and there is no *Deserted Village* in our literature. The nearest we come to it is found in the sectional note struck occasionally by New England writers. We have been fortunate, too, in some respects, in having no powerful neighbors to sober us by the ever-present possibility of subjugating invasion. Such long, aching stress of fear as beset England during the Napoleonic wars, which finds voice in Coleridge's *Fire, Famine, and Slaughter*, has been happily spared us.

Very closely related to this quality of humor is our idealistic optimism, with its source again largely in the fulness of opportunity offered by a rich and unexploited country. This spirit seems to grow more marked as we proceed westward, reaching its climax perhaps in the pages of Bret Harte, wherein is depicted the life of the early Californian. Here another element which has made for the emphasis upon optimism in our literature as a whole can be isolated and studied. The early Californians were picked men physically, men of robust health. Few of any other sort ever started for the land of gold in the first place, and the winnowing of the remorseless miles saw to it that those few never reached their goal. Those virile eupeptics who did arrive were naturally full of—as we have shortened the word—"pep", and just as naturally optimistic.

What is so easy of analysis in the case of the early Californian has taken place in the settling of the United States as a whole. In the mass, those who came to the New World were the most optimistic by nature of their country and of their generations. And as it is the informing spirit, and assuredly not the language, which makes literature, our own could not fail of being what it is, the most optimistic of all modern literatures.

Those immigrant generations which were laying the foundations of our civilization very fortunately left one thing pretty much behind them—the old feudal class-distinctions of Europe. Infinitely more than was the case in Great Britain during the corresponding period, the average man of Colonial times had to prove himself a man in the face of the impartial forces of nature. Before the beginning of the Revolution, the colonist had already

grown into democracy. His pioneer ancestors, meeting the same moulding forces which showed themselves so powerfully at Jamestown in 1607, have suffered no relapse into the spirit of a bygone age.

There yet remains one outstanding characteristic wherein a sharp cleavage is shown between British literature on the one hand and American on the other. That poignant emphasis upon spiritual doubt which has so deeply colored the literature of England for three quarters of a century is without a parallel on this side of the Atlantic. Run over the names of those British writers of the nineteenth century who have shown it in a part, or during the whole, of their careers: Carlyle, Tennyson, Clough, Arnold, Swinburne, FitzGerald, Henley, Watson, and Hardy. Where have we any corresponding names? We have always been serenely sure that we had a soul and that

"God's in his Heaven—
All's right with the world!"

With us there is no *Everlasting Nay*, no *Easter Day*, no *Dover Beach*, no *Great Misgiving*, because, for one potent reason, we did not produce a Darwin. We were not brought suddenly face to face with a deracinating doctrine of evolution, a doctrine not fully received in this country yet; and probably the first landmark of what acceptance it has received comes as late as Huxley's germinant lectures in New York in 1876.

If two famous cigarette makers separated by three thousand miles were each given three halves of identical tobacco leaves, each leaf of a different variety, and told to make one cigarette each, using tobacco from all three leaves, would they produce identical cigarettes? Of course they would not. Their cigarettes would be different because of variations in blending. If two great peoples, not identical to begin with, separated by three thousand miles of space, and by centuries of time, are given languages not identical, and a national psychology of increasing variation, are they going to produce the same literature? The question is an utter absurdity. Figuratively speaking, their different national ways of thinking and feeling—which alone determines nationality in literature—will

cause them to blend their half million or so leaves in indefinitely different ways.

Some dominant characteristics of French literature are sanity, wit, urbanity, and sense of form. Has British literature none of these things? It has all of them; and so has any other modern literature of importance. It is merely a question of the blending, of relative emphasis. If the miracle could be brought to pass that all Frenchmen should wake tomorrow speaking and writing the English language, their native tongue forgotten, would they produce an English literature? No, they would produce a French literature in an English tongue. Their minds and souls would still remain French; and in the likeness of these would they write.

American literature veritably does exist, has existed for some time; and, so far as human prescience can tell, will continue to exist. Optimism, spiritual serenity, democracy, humor, space consciousness—these are some of the outstanding features of American literature. Regardless of what language soever we might have inherited, we would have moulded it to express these qualities, and the other lesser ones touched upon above, in our own peculiar way, which is neither French, nor Hottentot, nor English, but American.

Yes, we have a literature. To deny us this is to deny us both mind and soul.

EARL L. BRADSHER.

Louisiana State University.

"LIKE HARMONY IN MUSIC"

"I allow you-all are foreigners."

"We are on our way a-travelen. We are a-looken for a good place to settle down," Henry said.

"Is the place where you-all come from a far piece from here?"

"A right far piece."

With this motif begins *The Time of Man*,¹ the Story of Ellen Chesser—always looking for a place of her own, always driven on to strange places. So we see her first, sitting patiently in the wagon with her father and mother. And so we follow her through "the flowing of the pageant" of her days. There is the drab sojourn at Hep Bodine's farm, where the starved child first feels the pangs of womanhood, of desire and beauty, first murmurs to herself, "It's unknowen how lovely I am, unknowen." Then follows the awakening time at Wakefield farm: Ellen flowering into beauty and joy, into love and anguish—an episode to be set beside the Froom Vale pastoral in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. With her lover's desertion her brief spring-time ends; the scene shifts again to that strange stony land over beyond St. Lucy's, where, in her utter need and loneliness, she finds Jasper Kent, rugged as the rocky hillside. With him she goes forth to new toils and wanderings, to childbirth and loss, betrayal and forgiveness—withal to the same endless seeking and hoping.

Retold thus, the story seems a slight thing. Yet there is upon it the spell of beauty, such as rarely visits the American fiction of to-day. Take the novels of Theodore Dreiser, or of Sinclair Lewis: how full they are of vitality, of meaning, but how empty of beauty! And this is not simply because the small town or big city life with which they deal is ugly; the Kentucky farm life of Ellen Chesser is full of a sordid ugliness that beats upon her spirit: "brown ground ugly and yesterday

¹*The Time of Man*. By Elizabeth Madox Roberts. The Viking Press, New York. 1926.

ugly and all the things people do." The ugliness of these modern novels goes beneath their matter to their informing view of life: chaotic and amorphous with Dreiser, hard and mechanistic with Lewis. To be sure, there are visitings of beauty in Sherwood Anderson's strange, groping glimpses of dark nights and deep rivers, in such brave figures as Willa Cather's *Ántonia* and Hamlin Garland's daughter of the Middle Border. But the beauty of *The Time of Man* is of its very essence: a vision of the common lot, so deeply felt that it becomes lyric. "All deep things are song," said Carlyle. Hear the music of the love-songs of Jasper and Ellen, like the *Song of Songs* or the Celtic tales:

"We will not part any more. Some fair country is what we'll find, and never part, me and you."

"If it would be light I could see a far piece, I know, but now it is dark but for the little way the moon goes."

"Rich soil, all cleared, land worth a man's sweat. And all my work will be for you all day."

"Our own house sometime that belongs to us. A rose to grow up over the chimney. A row of little flowers down to the gate."

"Your skin is soft under the coat, and warm, and you are a fair sight to see. Your mouth is sweet to taste, and your hair is sweet, and under the cloak is sweet."

"And I will never leave you, Jasper, forever, but I will stay with you all my enduren life and I will work for you all my days."

There are passages that throb with the strong rhythms of growth and of labor:

But the near way of the clods as she knew them, as she leaned over them, were a strength to destroy her strength. There present, the heaviness of the clods pulled at her arms . . . and her thought was clodded with earth. The sun was warm on her aching shoulders and her strong knees quivered with the strain.

Such a rendering of human life as part of the great process of nature recalls Wordsworth's Michael, Hardy's Tess, or Remont's *Peasants*. These figures are all emblems of the common lot. And so Ellen's wandering becomes a symbol of "that whole

time of man" on which she sometimes broods. In her musings we catch echoes of an eternal theme:

As for man his days are as grass, as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

The comparison of Reymont's *Peasants* with *The Time of Man* yields not only this likeness in effect but an equally striking contrast in method. The *Peasants* is vast, epic: a year in the life of a whole village set in the cycle of the seasons. *The Time of Man* is lyric, not only in the intensity of its feeling but in the singleness of its focus. It is through Ellen that we see it all; we know the other figures only as she knows them. The whole book is but the pattern of her consciousness: it is the record, not of events or of characters, but of the shaping of a human spirit.

This subjective method links Miss Roberts with James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson and the rest; and none of them has surpassed her in the rendering of perceptions, now faint as far echoes, now sharp as bugle notes:

She liked to sit in the white clover by the road, away from the after-supper noises of the cabin, a white clover of thought playing over her mind and spreading a sweetness through her flesh. . . . Feeling could not take words, so melted in and merged it was with the flowers of the grass. . . .

And for contrast this:

The farmer's wife was a sharp, crisp shape, standing tall out of the blackberry bushes. It pushed against her body and filled her mouth with a bitter taste.

Other novels have used such methods to make us feel the separateness of the individual's consciousness. Ellen's experience culminates in moments in which the spirit reaches out to the unknown beyond. After the first agony of Jonas's desertion has spent itself, "she continued to move in life . . . as if she were some vague memory in some useless mind . . . but in her dreams in the night she often arose to a great quiet beauty. There a deep sense of eternal and changeless well-being suffused

the dark." . . . And when Ellen, leaving the scene of her love for Jonas, lifts her eyes to the far-rolling mountains, she recognizes them as "contours burnt forever, or carved forever into memory"—as images of "those structures which seemed everlasting and undiminished within herself, recurring memories, feelings, responses, wonder, worship, all gathered into one final inner motion which might have been called spirit."

Such experience calls to mind passages in *The Prelude*: lines in which the poet not only records the moulding of his mind by sensations and memories, "huge and mighty forms . . . moved slowly through the mind," but recognizes that mystery of the human spirit responding to the deeper mystery of things:

"Dust as we are; the immortal spirit grows,
Like harmony in music."

It is this sense of meaning at the heart of life that gives the ground-rhythm to *The Time of Man*.

At the end, Ellen and her husband and children are "a-goen on again".

"Where do we think we'll go now, mammy, and where will we stay to-night?" one asked.

"I don't know. A far piece from here."

"God knows."

"Some better country. Our trees in the orchard. Our own land, maybe. Our place to keep. . . ."

They went a long way while the moon was still high above the trees, stopping only to water the beasts. They asked no questions of the way but took their own turnings.

FRANCES WENTWORTH KNICKERBOCKER.

Sewanee, Tennessee.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE PAGEANT OF AMERICA: A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES. Edited by Ralph Henry Gabriel. Vol. I, *Adventures in the Wilderness*, by Clark Wissler, C. L. Skinner, and William Wood, pp. 369; Vol. III, *Toilers of Land and Sea*, by R. H. Gabriel, pp. 340; Vol. V, *The Epic of Industry*, by Malcolm Keir, pp. 329; Vol. XI, *The American Spirit in Letters*, by Stanley Thomas Williams, pp. 329; Vol. XIII, *The American Spirit in Architecture*, by Talbot Faulkner Hamlin, pp. 353. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1926.

But a few years ago the Yale University Press distinguished itself in the publication of the remarkable *Chronicles of America*. Now in honor of the sesquicentennial year of Independence, the Press is planning the issue of fifteen volumes of pictorial history covering agriculture, industry, commerce, religion, literature, architecture, the fine arts, drama, sports,—everything relating to the life of man in North America from the time the European settler began to penetrate the virgin continent. In this venture the Yale University Council has enrolled a long and distinguished list of scholars in literature, economics, history, and the arts. If pictures would reveal the pageant of American life, from sea to sea, over the range of four centuries, it is a task that demands not only care but reverence for fact and illustration, freedom from tawdriness and sentiment. The first impression, as I unfold the volumes before me, is a happy one; nearly seven hundred pictures in a volume, with a running commentary of about fifty thousand words, worthy in itself, often noble in style, never obscuring the illustration, and the picture rarely weakening the text. Beautifully planned, balanced, executed.

The pictures run back to earliest times, contemporary drawings, maps, and photographs of museum models. The first is taken from the Latin MS. of Adam of Bremen, the Eleventh Century, discovered in the State Library at Vienna, which for the first time mentions Vinland. There are some, a few, stock paintings known to our youth,—Pocahontas saving John Smith, Washington crossing the Delaware, and similar fanciful pictures. The chapter on Columbus is a good example of the method

followed by the editors in illustrating history. Here are contemporary portraits of Ferdinand and Isabella; a number of early portraits of Columbus, notably the Jovius, the Yanez, the Uffizi portraits; the monastery at La Rabida; a reproduction of Toscanelli's chart; a picture of the Venetian shipyard, dated 1486; some modern paintings; ancient or modern, they touch and enliven the imagination in their totality.

The first volume, *Adventures in the Wilderness*, under the guidance of Clark Wissler, the curator of the division of anthropology, American Museum of Natural History, unrolls the history of the Indian and of the first settlers on American soil. We pass through Indian villages, we see harvesters and hunters and wives at their many tasks, we are among councilmen, we are taking part in communal ceremonials and play; nothing is idealized, distorted, embellished. There are pictures from the collections in the British Museum, from English books and journals of the period, such forgotten drawings as those of John White who accompanied Raleigh's Roanoke adventurers, drawings by Le Moyne, Lafitau, Bodmer, Catlin, Eastman, Remington, Schoolcraft, and sketches showing the results of recent researches and discoveries in the ruins of the Mayas and the cliff-dwellers. And we also see the Indian exterminated with gunpowder, whisky, and the Bible.

Toilers of Land and Sea is to my mind even greater in appeal and achievement, although the subject is not as "showy". In a sense it is a pioneer work, for nowhere can I find American industry and toil before the coming of industrialism illustrated in one book. We see the environment and the implements of the crude isolated homestead, the old grist mill, the struggle with forest, sea, and land, and the winning of a livelihood. One muses over these pictures and the life of the "old farm", told here with sympathetic intelligence and simplicity, feeling involuntarily the great dignity of toil; here earth and overarching heaven are one, and man and beast the lonely worshippers. After 1840 the illustrations are even richer, bringing together scattered drawings from the files of *Harper's Weekly*, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, old books, and paintings by Winslow Homer, Thomas Wood, Abbey, Johnson, Howland, Taylor.

Dr. Stanley Thomas Williams is handicapped by the fact that literature cannot be told in pictures, certainly not the literature of ideas and movements. He solved the problem by making the picture everything so far as the personality of the author is concerned, and reducing the text-matter to a subordinate place. We have here rare portraits and quaint illustrations from old editions, pictures of the authors' homes and haunts, illustrations to tales, title-pages, caricatures, a wealth of familiar and unfamiliar material. Some reproductions are distinctly rare,—Emerson and Holmes sitting together on Boston Commons, or Lowell in bright-checked trousers. Mr. Talbot Faulkner Hamlin, in *The American Spirit in Architecture*, presents a colorful story of architectural development, with critical comments, succeeding wonderfully because drawings, engravings and photographs tell their story without the help of words. It is an important volume, the first to give a continuous history of our architecture from the Fairbanks house at Dedham, 1640, to the new Shelton hotel in New York. The early pictures reflect the European outlook of the settler, his bond with the homeland; then come the stately colonial homes, north and south, of the wealthy and cultured planters and merchants; the dreadful examples and the ugliness of the period of ruthless exploitation and expansion; the brownstone porches of the dull bourgeoisie; and finally the growing restraint and taste and variety of domestic, commercial, and public building to-day. This volume should be studied side by side with Professor Keir's *The Epic of Industry*, for both present fresh material and views, both relate their pictures to the contemporary environment, both show the flux of life against the changes in technology. The age of simple tools in one book is matched by the quiet simple houses in the other; the age of coal and steel and railways is matched by the shams of the fifties and sixties in architecture; and the modern age of industrial regulation, coördination and functional ideology in business is reflected in the artistic restraint of our times. The history of organized labor in one book is the history of community planning in the other. The texts of Keir and Hamlin charm as much as the pictures; they are rapid, sharp, spare, stripped of nonessentials, efficient

as a piece of machinery, a skyscraper, a modern bungalow with all improvements.

I close the five books, with a sense of sweet weariness, and my mind is compounding them into one, seeking to formulate some single impression. The work as a whole is not vulgar propaganda in the sense of blatant patriotism, it is not even a popularization of history, not an outline. It is a blending of sound history with entertainment, style expressed in pictures, giving as genuine an intellectual delight as the flow of prose. Picture and text, combined and balanced, portray the rich panorama of our life in all its varied activities. It does not disturb, it raises no problems, it avoids the disharmonies and conflicts of existence as it avoids sentimentality and romance, but it traverses our history in all its dimensions until the beholder realizes that he is sharing in the spiritual possessions of the race, the oneness of our development above struggle and division. The child will enjoy the picture; youth will tremble with the advance of conquering life and the thrill of contact with land and sea; the aged head will grow meditative under the spell of long struggles and adaptations, conquests and defeats, the dead and living, and feel the tragedy of life, death walking quietly beside the marchers.

W. E. H.

THE BEGINNINGS OF HISTORY ACCORDING TO THE JEWS. By Charles Prosper Fagnani. New York: Albert and Charles Boni. Pp. 111.

THE KEY TO FAITH. By M. O. Gershenson. Authorized translation from the Russian by Herman Frank. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1926. Pp. 156.

THE REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY. By Douglass Clyde Macintosh, Dwight Professor of Theology in Yale University. The \$6,000 Bross Prize for 1925. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Pp. i-xi, 292.

The first of the above books, as correctly stated on the title-page, is "A new Translation [of the first eleven chapters of Genesis] from a Revised Text with Notes" and is offered as "A Contribution to the discussion of Fundamentalism". The avowed purpose of the author, as elaborately worked out in the sixteen pages of Foreword, is to explode a bomb in the camp

of the Fundamentalists by discrediting any possible use of the first eleven chapters of Genesis as a source of scientific information. With this there need be no quarrel. It has long been the view of educated men and may be said to have begun (in modern times) when Galileo said "the Bible is not to show us how the heavens go but how to go to heaven". Unfortunately, however, Professor Fagnani does not show us how to go to heaven in his comments on the first eleven chapters of Genesis, or in his summary of the history down to and inclusive of Daniel, 165 B.C. He goes as far in one direction as the Fundamentalist does in the other and leaves not a vestige of spiritual truth or meaning anywhere. All of which is sufficiently surprising in a professor in a Christian [the Union] theological seminary.

That the writers of the early chapters of the Bible used ancient stories as the vehicles of high spiritual truths about God and man, purging the Babylonian myths of their polytheism and gross sensuality, is one of the commonplaces of modern spiritual-critical study of the Old Testament.

Gershenson's *Key to Faith*, on the other hand, which deals with the Old Testament as a whole, is a really profound book, a veritable *multum in parvo*, and as different from Professor Fagnani's as cheese from chalk. The book was written in the shadow of the first years of the Bolshevik upheaval, in the midst of hunger and cold, and is representative of the thought of a group of the old "intelligentsia" brooding over the problems of man and society. Born in 1869 at Kishinev, Southwest Russia, of Jewish middle class stock, Gershenson died in 1925, having lived through "the crisis of the Western civilization as revealed by the Great War", and "its aftermath led him to the conclusion that the spiritual life would never again be constructed on its former false foundation—the supremacy of the abstract over the personal"; for "the more abstract the spiritual values (Prosperity, Morals, Religion, Nationality), the more heartless and greedy are they". It is in the Old Testament that the author finds, not the mere absence of scientific information, but the profoundest truth of life.

Wellhausen's documentary hypothesis, now generally accepted by critics, does not blind Gershenson to the spiritual unity of the Bible—nor does criticism by the intellect anywhere in life mean for him the loss of spiritual meaning and insight. The religion of humanity without God possesses for him no attractions. He firmly believes, to quote from the translator's excellent Introduction, that "the religious impulses supply the cohesive force which unifies a society and a culture. . . . But all his views imply a decided opposition to every kind of deification of humanity or the nation."

And this religion he found in the Old Testament. *The Key to Faith*, again quoting from the Introduction, "is essentially a whole-hearted attempt by a modern to open up a new access to the Book Eternal"; and beginning with "The Burning Bush", he carries us on through lower conceptions of God up to "The God Ideal of the Prophets"; from which height he considers "God and Humanity" and then sums up in his "Conclusion": "the exchange of the will to differ for the preference to conform as the right idea of man's proper conduct—as the unalterable condition of his prosperity—is the key to faith, the essence of religion."

Written by a Jew, the work not only is enlightening to the Christian believer but contains at least one statement which the most orthodox Christian can gladly adopt: "The fear of God is a guide like the compass at sea: the soul must be steered to the all-embracing perfection of the world—God—as its port or destination. But now that the compass by itself had ceased to be man's sole dependence, now that the sea had been thoroughly explored and the right channel for the right practice of human life had been discovered; steer midstream! The former demand—Obey the law of the world, the will of God—was supplemented by another and even clearer law: Obey the human statute of the world's law—in the mind of the race. . . . God became man: that is, man conceived the regulating set of his racial spirit as one with that of the universe. In this incarnated form the personification of God provided the material for the august tragedy."

Professor Macintosh might well have taken Gershenson's treatise as the foundation for his *Reasonableness of Christianity*. In spite of the weakness of the old apologetic which based itself on externalities of the Old Testament and New Testament alike, to which the author does full justice, it remains true that Christ said: "I came not to destroy but to fulfill the law and the prophets"; and if one happens to see into the inwardness of the Old Testament and to be a believer in evolution, he will have a strong foundation for his faith in those centuries of experience culminating in Christ and the Kingdom of God, as the "Reign of the Spirit."

Nevertheless, there was room for a treatment of Christianity from a different angle. Casting aside the old apologetic, the author goes back to John Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity* and plants himself on the proposition that "it is sufficient for the vindication of the Christian faith to defend as reasonable that which serves to mark one off as a Christian." The question, What is the essence of Christianity? is answered neither in the terms of Hegel nor of Ritschl; neither of speculation nor of religious value alone, though concessions are made to both; but first of all, in certain views of Morality, Moral Optimism, Freedom, Immortality, God, Providence, and Revelation. These views are defended as "deeply grounded in life [and] yet universally valid and objective"; and without the embarrassment of critical questions concerning "The Historic Jesus", or concerning Christology. Moreover, "an essentially Christian faith in God and an essentially Christian experience of moral salvation through the right religious adjustment are *logically* possible without either Christology or an assured belief in the historicity of Jesus."

Having thrown these overboard as so much excess baggage, it is next contended that "it may be that a certain belief in the historicity of Jesus and a certain Christology are, if not logically essential to the *being*, still psychologically essential to the highest *well-being* of Christianity."

Accordingly, two chapters are devoted to a constructive treatment of The Historic Jesus and The Person and Work of Christ; and then the results are defended as reasonable according to

the test of "Knowledge in General", under the two heads of Science and Philosophy, two sons of the one Father, Common Sense.

Orthodox believers will think too much is conceded to the possibility of essential Christianity without Christ. Believers in the New Testament will argue that whatever is admitted to be essential to the *well-being* of Christianity can hardly be excluded from essential Christianity itself. A more serious criticism yet is that if essential Christianity may dispense with the historic Jesus as the Logos become flesh, human, as not absolutely necessary, then we lose the final verification in experience of those ideals which the author presents as reasonable in themselves. The author's apologetic goes no further than to permit us to hold certain beliefs, provided we already hold them. Nevertheless, the whole discussion is carried on in an able and helpful manner; and its very limitations make it all the more useful to that large class of intelligent people who are sympathetically inclined towards the spiritual interpretation of life but who are not ready to be converted to the Christianity of the New Testament.

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LIFE AND LETTERS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON. By Francis W. Hirst. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1926. Pp. 588.

JEFFERSON AND HAMILTON: THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA. By Claude G. Bowers. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1925. Pp. 530.

JEFFERSON. By Albert Jay Nock. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1926. Pp. 340.

In historical biography, 1926 is Jefferson's year, with nearly a dozen books about him and his period. The din of the great battle on the threshold of our national life between the protagonists of democracy and oligarchy does not die down. The shadow of Jefferson is hovering over the land; his thought is troubling us anew. Is his memory revived because this "fanatic of liberty" has become the stereotype of democracy? Is it a desire to set his memory right, the man so often called a dreamer

and a theorist? Is it our reaction from the inhibitive powers of high finance and politics, and a renaissance of old individualism? Or do we simply love him, like children, yielding to the spell of his vast daring and resolution, we who are petty and cowardly?

The personality of Jefferson has a fascination for us, because he cannot be comprehended as a politician and statesman only. He possessed a mind of immense curiosity and originality, versatile as only the giants of the eighteenth century were versatile: man of letters, naturalist, horticulturist, architect, rationalist, reformer, educator, statesman, inventor, all rolled into one. So baffling is his personality, and so confused our own generation about the ways of democracy, that it still seems impossible to write about him without bias and design. The works before us are all equally purposive and incomplete.

Mr. Hirst, an English economist and journalist, intended to correct the hostile account of the American democrat in F. S. Oliver's work on Hamilton, and to rebuke those who have made a caricature of Jefferson. His is a work written in the mellow pedestrian English manner, the narrative serving as a string for long citations from letters, speeches and documents. Scolding the Oliverians, he leans too far in defending, praising and admiring a life that seems all bathed in sunshine, without shadows. It is a serviceable book; it should cement the ancient ties of kinship, remove historical misunderstandings. 'Tis a pity, though, that while he was at it, the author has not familiarized himself with the researches of American scholars like Osgood, Andrews, Beer, in sections relating to the Revolution, but has instead accepted the account of the prejudiced Trevelyan. The lapse is not intentional, only an insufficiency of fundamental research on a related topic. Admiring Jefferson, he does not seek to make him consistent. Thus the sounding pronouncement that "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed" is allowed to stand as a defense, in part, of Jefferson's territorial acquisitions on the ground that American interests will "ever be found inseparable from our moral duties." Mr. Hirst does exceedingly well in stressing Jefferson the empire-builder, even if it somewhat impeaches the pristine purity of Jefferson's theory of democracy or the picture

of him in the popular imagination. More than any man of his time Jefferson was the creator of the United States; great because he discovered that in practice his ideal had a disintegrating force, and greater still because unlike Hamilton he did not fall back on an antiquated theory of government on the excuse that democracy has its limitations. When Mr. Hirst draws the man holding on to the essential liberating forces of the French Revolution at a time when influential men about him were talking of its horrors and calling for a strong government in defense of property rights, or when he stresses Jefferson's serene confidence in the days of the Embargo at a time when the civilized world was bending a slavish knee before Pitt or Napoleon, I am impelled to stand with the author worshipful before the great man: he who was alone indeed with his articulated faith in democracy; alone with a dream which was to come true.

Mr. Bowers comes to his subject from journalism and practical politics. As history his book presents nothing new. His sympathies are all with Jefferson. He shares with frontiersmen their prejudices against the pomp and vanity of royalty; he is moved to mock at the ceremonials under Washington and at John Adams's itch for titles. But his study is alive and wide-ranging on the origins of the principles of Jeffersonian democracy. He has made free use of the newspapers and pamphlets of the time in order to give a fair idea of the period, the partizanship and the unrestraint in thought and conversation. The ten-year struggle between Jefferson and Hamilton for the destinies of the country is told here with gusto and dramatic effects, the scene now in Congress, now in Mrs. Bingham's drawing-room, in taverns, on the street. These are glowing pages, crowded with long galleries of men and women caught in the struggle for leadership. And not Hamilton, but Jefferson emerges as the practical man, the hero of rounded and complete integrity who understood the forces at work in society and by what means to hold them in control.

Against the excessive zeal of Mr. Bowers the reader must be on his guard. He abuses Hamilton and his friends for their

attitude to the European war in 1793, their efforts to restore friendly intercourse with England, the Jay treaty, although the interests of the country have fully justified the Federalists in their course in the early days of independence. On the other hand, he gives Hamilton his due for cementing the disunited states into a union by establishing the credit of the new country at home and abroad. Such incongruity cannot be smoothed into logical coherence by arguing that Hamilton's fundamental mistake lay in that he sought to achieve his ends without the aid of the masses; it is to forget that the democratic methods possible a decade later were not promising of success in the first three critical years, and that at the time Jefferson was carried to power on the wave of democratic opposition the dangers threatening the infant republic were passed.

The work of Mr. Nock is cast in a different mould. His is not a conventional biography or a history of contemporary life, but "a study in conduct and character", an illuminating essay of the mind and heart of Jefferson. As an essay it is written with directness, force, brilliance, freshness of style familiar to the readers of the late *Freeman*. As a portrait it is sympathetic, intelligent, selective and integrated. It is therefore needless to point out that the author is not always painstaking as a historian; in his description of English mercantilism as "blind veracity", for instance, or in his regard of the Louisiana Purchase as a boon for the land speculator, or in his conception of the Embargo as confiscatory and subversive to liberty. The prime aim of Mr. Nock was to paint a portrait, and the formula was simple. The conflict between Jefferson and Hamilton did not spring from differences about government, but different class loyalties. Economic class-consciousness is Mr. Nock's fundamental postulate. He accepts fully Professor Beard's economic interpretation of the Constitution of 1787, and pictures Jefferson as the representative of the class of producers (as understood by the physiocrats of the time) against the class of the privileged and the exploiters whose interests were championed by Hamilton. The hero is not permitted to grow out of the changing facts and thoughts of the passing years; which helps to explain Mr. Nock's, but not

Jefferson's, view of the Louisiana Purchase or the Embargo. The method is stimulating to Nock, the artist, who must look to his colors first, but it cannot stand as an indictment of Jefferson, the sitter, that he has failed to grasp economic facts; a method inadmissible even when the sitter is rewarded boisterously with a clean bill of health for having ably, instinctively, represented the producing classes before the coming of the all-revealing doctrines of economic determinism and single tax. If Jefferson—ah!—had only known Marx, Beard, George, or the editor of any socialist newspaper!

Lastly, let every American read these excellent volumes in the order of Nock, Bowers, Hirst. Taken together they tell us a good deal about Jefferson, and incidentally they reveal to the sensitive reader our own heart-breakings and illusions and vows on the subject of democracy. But the story of the life and times of Jefferson that would leave ourselves out remains yet to be written, to put it prosily. Our present disillusionment is with a democracy that has been prohibitive. The old democracy despised aristocratic shams, class pride, privilege; we are sick of negations. It is time for new values, time for the Yea, for new trust-making. It does not become us to smear the portrait of the great democrat with our own colors, to swear by him with the facts of his day, or to vow in his name eternal hatred of new structure-forming and pact-making for social guidance and order. The greatness of Jefferson lay in his belief that democracy has come to destroy the basic fact of the old world which got its bread with injustice, and in his courage to make the democratic experiment. He understood the powers of the new order born in the conflict of the frontier with old-world privilege, and he was conscious of the weakness of the mobs' Nay to authority. But he was not discouraged, in office or in private life. He did not draw back from a fact, but believed, unfrightened by mob rule. He believed in the revolution and democracy because it has been decided to set the foundations of society on the bases of popular consent and participation. Others have apprehended the new truth, touched, debated, approved, or cast away. He built the empire with the empire-

builders, keeping close to the earth, giving himself to things earthly. But he it was, alone, who also said let us sling the kit over our shoulders and go out into the open, over roads untraveled, and build the new life. We are deaf to the Yea of Jefferson, his command to go forth and to build, forming new mutual trusts and constitutions, with the realities of life lying about us.

E. M. K.

AMERICAN INDIAN LOVE LYRICS AND OTHER VERSE. Selected by Nellie Barnes. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1925.

LADDERS THROUGH THE BLUE. By Hermann Hagedorn. Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Company. 1925.

TIGER JOY. By Stephen Vincent Binet. New York: George H. Doran Company. 1925.

CARAVAN. By Witter Bynner. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1925.

PRIAPUS AND THE POOL AND OTHER POEMS. By Conrad Aiken. New York: Boni & Liveright. 1925.

JANUARY GARDEN. By Melville Cane. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1926.

The group of books I am going to talk about satisfies my puritanical inclination. Life—and books—are constantly forcing me to acknowledge many and incompatible kinds of goodness, thwarting my longing to hate. But for all the godlikeness of Satan, some repugnant things do not turn out to be another kind of good. Here are six books of poems; five constitute kinds and degrees of goodness; and one is bad.

American Indian Love Lyrics and Other Verse.—Evidently for the collector of these poems the interest was greater than the appeal. Her long and difficult analytical note on "Poetic Forms in American Indian Lyrics", to say nothing of the Foreword by Miss Mary Austin, indicates a desire to "understand", rather than imaginative sensitiveness to, "the form and spirit of this verse". Doubtless that accounts for the fact that less scholarly collections of Indian poetry contain finer poems. I doubt if anyone would read all of these songs and rituals for their intrinsic quality. But it is interesting to come close to

the pains and fears and cravings and delighted surprises of comparatively simple people in their more articulate moments and to recognize how near in main emotions and yearnings we continue them. It is interesting to see how emotions can express themselves in sound and rhythm, often through inadequate or even irrelevant words. And, besides, some poems, apart from considerations of the genesis of verse-technique and of anthropology, are quite simply and impressively right and lovely.

Ladders Through the Blue.—This is the bad book. It is facile, fluent, obviously musical poetry for people who unconsciously crave confirmation in their self-deceptions. It is a crock of sweetened honey. It is a spiritual china-closet for idealists who mustn't have their ideals chipped and smeared by use. It is a collection of verses manufactured according to tested methods to suit occasions and to comply with general moods. For instance, there is a poem for a new baby; a poem for a husband to read his wife on the wedding anniversary; a poem about a child praying; and a poem about a perfect four-year-old girl. And of course it is crammed with hand-painted imitations of the flower and fruit designs of all the favorite artists. On one page I find: "dewy ground", "silent sound", "crystal gems", "seraph with shimmering wings", "faint fragrance", "silver strings", "in space we reel", "beacons", "mirrored glow", "close against my heart", and "holy hours". In short, this is the poetizing of a man who could write of Roosevelt as a prophet, and entitle another biography *That Human Being, Leonard Wood*.

Tiger Joy.—In this book effects of pragmatic romance and puckish philosophy are also somewhat too consciously worked up. It is diverting; it has the awkward charm of the clown; the good-natured lawless smartness of the end-man of a minstrel show. And it has subtlety that they make no pretense to. But like their performances these comic and robustious and slyly pathetic poems seem to me too shrewdly concerned with the audience ever to be exquisite in their subtlety, precise in their indication of the joyous and the grotesque. The ingenious rhymes come a shade too easily, the daring figures are now and again a hair inapposite, and the bravado is not quite purely a

burlesque strut. Like the clown in the circus, the youthful poet is perhaps a little damaged, a little cynical, by reason of seeing too much of the world too fast.

Caravan.—Exquisiteness is achieved in such flexibly and unaffectedly musical lyrics as "She Slept Like a Lady", and "A Winter Cat-Tail", and "Never a Faun". In this book a salt of deep humor and an acid of sympathy keep sweet melodies from mawkishness and save a sparkling beverage from being flat. *Caravan* contains gallant and enchanting verse, but not great poetry; the writer cannot make a universe seem to revolve in his poetry; he has no position from which to exert gravitational forces. It is probably inevitable that one whose "single constancy is love of life" should seem somewhat freakish in his moralizings; and Mr. Bynner does above a bit of moralizing. None the less, that love of life is bold and patient enough as well as avid and athletic enough to beget original and exquisite poems.

Priapus and the Pool and Other Poems.—Mr. Aiken has a central position; and this book seems to me great poetry. It is sad. But the sadness is the resultant of strong passion met by cynical repulse. And thwarted love secures some expression in a deep and melancholy music that is chastened by the resistance. Such subtle and passionate poetry is great when it is so clear; such clear and subtle poetry is great when it is so passionate; such passionate and clear poetry is great when it is so subtle. The tone of the music is not melancholy because the poet chose to be sad. He is not vaunting disillusionment. He still loves; and he still delights in beauty.

His poems are in a sense fanciful. They are not obviously shapely. They are about feelings rather than about things. Like music they communicate emotion without rationalizing. But they are firm and all the profuse images signify. Unlike Swinburne, for instance, Conrad Aiken never seems in this book a mere virtuoso with lovely sounds. He enchants but does not mesmerize. His lines not only ring the bells of a cathedral sunk beneath the sea; they ring true.

And if the greatness of his poems is less than the greatness of the best of our time and nation, it is, I think, because he is

not so lucky-wise as the greatest in discovering "what to make of a diminished thing."

January Garden.—These poems are records of discoveries, in language and pattern aptly suited to the experience; some take you by surprise because they are so strange in their fit design; others make you wonder at the newness of a form almost familiar. "I Have Seen" is the title of one of the little lyrics in this group of poems and I am convinced that the writer has seen unprecedentedly and acutely with his senses, that he has seen intensely and unfeignedly and extractingly with his emotions, that he has seen courageously and patiently and probingly and connectingly and fairly and inclusively and responsibly and practically with his entire intelligence, and that, because he has done so and is continually doing so, he is, as human beings go, a master of the art of life. Poems about "City Sounds", about "Gulls" or "Along Any Lovely Road" or about the weed, "Self Heal"—whatever they're about, they are strong, whimsically restrained, implicitly eager, every inch of surface flushed and heated with the urge of life that is both hunger and pent-up excess. And yet Melville Cane is edged and tempered, and his cuttings are more often than not across the grain. Turpentine flows from them as often as sweet sap. And there are knots that cause a whimper or an angry jangle as he cuts. You need toughened hands to grasp some splintery chunks.

For me the poems in *January Garden* were new sights, smells, and sounds, new hefts and hotnesses, new dents and scratches, new grips, clenches, and soft kindling strokes. Equally they were assurances, reconciliations, encitements, holds, and steadiers. For these poems are about things, but they evince a brave, sound, composed person with a generous ironical smile.

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THE SELECTED POEMS OF LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE. New York: George H. Doran Company. 1926. Pp. 187.

One likes to turn aside from the congested highways of life, forget the brawling world on quiet country lanes, lose for

however small a space the world's vital burning issues in the seclusion of old-time gardens. Let me pass by paths bordered with box hedges under white cherry trees—the East Shore of Maryland, Miss Reese's own world. I will read in peace, on the grass, her unconventional yet old poems—ever new and ever old as the grass and blossoming trees. They sing firm, simple themes of loss, separation, loneliness, reconciliation, "old joy, old pain", sad memories and beauty of familiar things. But there are springs and earth-sweetness, too, in her carefully ordered garden; her cultivated songs are informed with her own life's desire to taste "lovely, secure, unhastening things."

A quiet garden. Nothing flares up sudden here from seeds come God knows where. No piercing words; no vain despair; no breaking anger; no wild ecstasy; no shouts of victory. There is quiet grey grief as an early mist above the trees; prayers for a life abundant, not to be trampled upon in the dust; songs clean and simple and mellow as age.

So let these unhurried songs remain, her own chosen songs. Some—who knows how many?—will always be treasured by posterity; a few poems of grey and tender rain, a few songs of loneliness, and such memorable sonnets as *When I consider Life and its few years* or *Oh, you who love me not, tell me some way*. We cannot forget them so long as the world has need of country lanes and quiet gardens and cherry trees.

E. M. K.

THE GREAT AMERICAN ASS—AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY. Anonymous. New York: Brentano's. 1926. Pp. 316.

Confessional literature and emotional vaporings in verse and prose, frank through the force of deliberate design, are in style these days. Thousands of little fellows who should be holding jobs and watching over their little ones, are discovering their frustrated souls, and are proclaiming it with glee and vengeance. "I froth at the mouth with frustration," cries the Great American Ass. What's the trouble? It is difficult to locate it in the mass of self-satisfied braying, self-castigation, delusion, parental bigotry and tyranny, pride, broken hopes in competition with others, improper diet. What worries Mr. Roy Bradley—Roy is

the name of the ass, not the baptismal name—is that “I, the Yankee cub nursed on the milk of Massachusetts legend and reared up to roar the Yankee triumphs, am an ass in the wilderness of frustration”. In plainer words, in the struggle for rootage out in Nebraska and Kansas the Yankee was worsted in adaptation to life by the vigorous immigrant stock which he despised, and so the chosen of the Lord is a-braying under Heaven because God has allowed the inferior to win. In his delusion he has discovered himself to be a victim of the Puritan “culture” (a meaning borrowed from Spengler), and he whines because the poet in him is condemned to frustration in a mechanical age.

The cancer of Puritan culture is a long familiar diagnosis. But when I become interested in his discovery of life-giving “civilization” (again Spengler) the Great American Ass leads me in a dithyrambic whirl to a land of forgotten romance. Then I realize that his real trouble lies in thinking that frustration is necessarily an evil, that his individual life is important in the cosmos, and that the stars will sing golden hosannas because a descendant of Puritan Roundheads has found truth, peace, and beauty; or thinks that he has found them. E. M. K.

TWO PREFACES. By Walt Whitman. With an introductory note by Christopher Morley. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. 1926. Pp. 67.

We have declined sadly from the spacious optimism that informed the Golden Age with a social fervor and a faith without conflict and confusion. We can recapture it now as in a manifesto, as in a Commandant before the commentaries are written, in Walt's own *Preface to Leaves of Grass* written for the original 1855 edition, and in *A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads* for that of 1888; and, reading and rereading the brief glowing pages, turn understandingly, as never before, to “Salut au Monde”, “Columbus”, “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking”, “Song of the Broad-Axe”, “Drum Taps.” No biography or criticism published accounts for him better than these prefaces, omitted from the various editions of the poems and now edited separately. An as-

tonishing document, a theory of poetry, a manifesto of democracy, which made Emerson write: "I find it the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed." Except for two or three passages cataloguing the virtues of the plain man, his deathless attachment to freedom and amativeness, the original preface is beautiful, superb, shining, incomparable. I agree with Morley, that it is "as important in American literature as the Gettysburg speech in American history."

Thirty-three years later, in "the early candle-light of old age", Walt wrote the preface to *November Boughs*. He feels he has failed with his own generation, but is glad that he has gained a hearing. He did not cut himself loose from the past, he asserts, did not seek to destroy it, but to advance the outposts of poetry to new regions. "Modern science and democracy seem'd to be throwing out their challenge to poetry to put them in its statements in contradistinction to the songs and myths of the past." And looking back, Walt is proud that his work is adapted to the new needs, resting upon standards and ranges of thought in modern life.

E. JONES.

WHITE SERVITUDE IN PENNSYLVANIA. By Cheesman A. Herrick. Philadelphia: John Joseph McVey. 1926. Pp. 330.

The author has fully achieved his double purpose of writing with love and leisure the story of indentured and redemption labor in the proprietary colony of Pennsylvania with the philosophical spirit and the amplitude the subject deserves. He has taken his time, a quarter of a century, and the result is a splendidly documented and illustrated picture of labor in colonial America. Most of our histories give little notice to the large class of men, women, and children "bound to service"; the class mentioned in the apportionment clause in the Constitution. Dr. Herrick writes fully of the condition of our "redemptioners" from the founding of Pennsylvania to the Revolution, the need for them, the sources of supply, their efforts for liberation and opportunity in life. It is the best available account of a condition long neglected.

REVIEWS IN BRIEF

DEPENDENT AMERICA. By William C. Redfield. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1926. Pp. 268.

Here is the raw material for everlasting peace, by the former Secretary of Commerce under President Wilson. We, the richest and best provisioned country in the world, even we depend for our prosperity on supplies from outside. The two thousand different parts that make up a radio set have to travel a total of two hundred and fifty thousand miles from their foreign places to our factories. Our steel industry requires forty commodities from fifty-seven countries. Our cheese comes from twenty-one countries, our beans from thirty-four, and sausage sage casings from fifty. No leather without the quebracho tree; no shellac without tachardia lacca; no wood pulp without Canada; no tires without crude rubber; no aluminum without Guiana; no castor oil without—oh, well! Here are the materials for sermons in internationalism, peace, independence, friendliness among nations. And ex-Secretary Redfield makes good use of them in case of countries and places we do not hold. But since copra comes from the Philippines, he thinks we must prevent the islands from falling into "unstable" and "hostile" hands.

THE DREADFUL DECADE 1869-1879. By Don C. Seitz. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1926. Pp. 312.

Always corruption stalks in the wake of war. The decade between reconstruction and resumption was a decade of unbridled egotism in business and politics, of scandals in federal, state, and municipal governments going hand in hand with public complacency, prudery, hypocrisy, until it seemed that decency and order would return no more. "Dreadful" may be sweeping and inapplicable as a description of the decade, since the interest of the author is bounded by a group of rascals in public life. Mr. Seitz's journalistic writing stands out for its directness of attack, lucidity, and ease, but it is lacking in

critical acumen and understanding. The nine chapters have no inner compelling unity, nor are they related to the national background as a whole. They stand as sensational sketches, carrying current gossip, facts, and rumors. As a rule his judgments of political figures are sound, and the accounts of the Tweed Ring, the Credit Mobilier and "Jim" Fisk are vivid indeed; on the other hand, it is hard to see how the Beecher-Tilton scandal belongs to this age of "Grantism". Fortunately for readers the whole period is better described in the sedate history of Professor Ellis P. Oberholtzer.

THE MAKING OF THE MODERN MIND. By John Herman Randall, Jr.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1926. Pp. 653.

The author traces the forces and movements that have moulded human society from the twelfth to the twentieth centuries. By centuries, the exposition is excellent, serious, inclusive, with a fine freedom from the prevalent dramatization of history of the Wellsian variety. The author deals with the mediæval mind, romanticism, social conflicts, industrialism, and succeeds in showing the main aspects of the new world of science and machinery out of which flows the social age, "the complex interrelation of social groups." This is important, but it is not clear how the modern mind becomes the reflex of these interrelations. The difficulty increases when it is further revealed that since 1848 we are being absorbed by the dull and unprogressive middle class. But when the author finally declares that the modern mind is defined by faith and intelligence his benevolence and optimism convince no one but himself.

MEN, WOMEN AND COLLEGES. By LeBaron Russell Briggs. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1925. Pp. 180.

One is never disappointed with a college address by Dean Briggs, who always manages to be so illuminating, so wise, in spite of his commanding authority. The main theme of the present collection is aimed at the crude philosophy of individual ambition and development carrying within them the seeds of ultimate destruction, the narrowing and cheapening of life.

THE RELIGION OF UNDERGRADUATES. By Cyril Harris. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1925. Pp. 87.

The author is alarmed at the growing indifference and dense ignorance of college youth about religion, and simultaneously encouraged and upborne by the evidences of actual hunger after faith. He blames science for its materialism, and the church for its boresome practices, but expresses the familiar confidence in the need of science and faith for the full life.

EDUCATIONAL FRONTIERS. By Scott Nearing. New York: Thomas Seltzer. 1925. Pp. 250.

It is a story of a great teacher, Professor Simon N. Patten, who tried to free the young student from the domination of form, who believed that the truest function of the teacher is the stimulation of personality. It is also a plea to teachers to assume leadership as soldiers in the realm of ideas. But the relationship of the teacher to the collective purpose is hard to grasp, for such a purpose implies centralized authority, a form of righteousness at the top, and so a new menace to real freedom.

SOCIETY AND ITS SURPLUS. By Newell LeRoy Sims. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1925. Pp. 581.

The late Professor Patten has familiarized us with the idea of "pain" and "pleasure" economy and the concept of social evolution in terms of a growing surplus after the demands of animal existence have been satisfied. This thesis is here expanded to the proportions of a large book, a thing that wanted to be done these years. It is a valuable contribution on the ways the "surplus" determines the extent and quality of social life and the problem of just distribution.

POPULATION. By A. M. Carr-Saunders. New York: Oxford University Press. 1925. Pp. 111.

Rarely has a primer appeared more scholarly and successful about a subject so complex as population, yet readable in spite of its close reasoning and analysis, than the study of Carr-Saunders. He has, moreover, extended the familiar bounds of the discussion by including the subject of international relations.